

# LIFE OF LORD SELKIRK

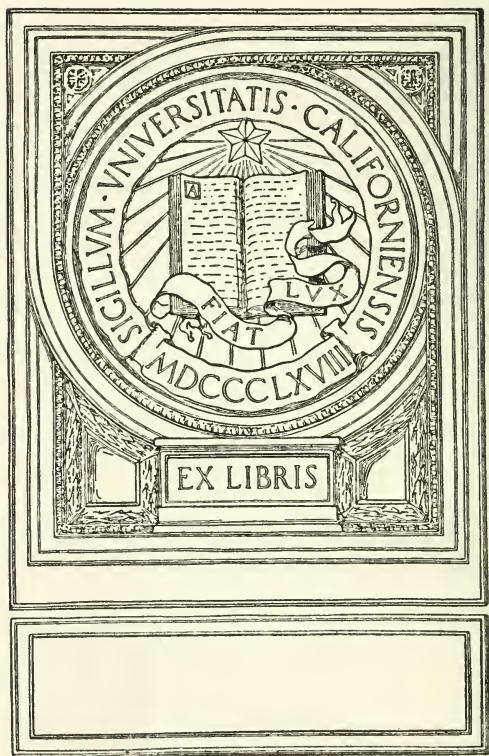
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BY DR GEORGE BRYCE







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*Centennial  
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THE LIFE OF  
LORD SELKIRK

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Parts I. and II.







# THE LIFE OF LORD SELKIRK

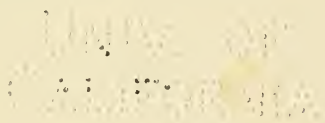
COLONISER OF WESTERN CANADA

BY

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Royal Commission on Technical Education; President  
of Royal Society of Canada (1910)



*ILLUSTRATED*

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I.	
THE GREAT DOUGLAS FAMILY . . . . .	I
II.	
LORD SELKIRK'S BIRTHPLACE . . . . .	6
III.	
HIS EARLY LIFE . . . . .	11
IV.	
A NOBLE DREAMER . . . . .	15
V.	
THE SETTLERS BY THE SEA . . . . .	20
VI.	
FIRST VISIT TO CANADA. . . . .	24
VII.	
THE FEVER AT BALDOON . . . . .	28
VIII.	
THE EARL'S GREAT ENTERPRISE . . . . .	33
IX.	
THREE SHIPS SET SAIL TO YORK FACTORY	38
X.	
COLD WINTER AT YORK FACTORY . . . . .	42

	PAGE
XI.	
LANDING AT RED RIVER, AUGUST 30, 1812 . . . . .	47
XII.	
THE FIRST THREE CONTINGENTS . . . . .	52
XIII.	
A RED-COAT INTRUDER . . . . .	57
XIV.	
THE NEW GOVERNOR. . . . .	63
XV.	
THE SEVEN OAKS MASSACRE . . . . .	67
XVI.	
LORD SELKIRK RELIEVES HIS COLONY . . . . .	74
XVII.	
PERSECUTION IN CANADA . . . . .	79
XVIII.	
LORD SELKIRK RETURNS HOME TO DIE . . . . .	85
XIX.	
HIS DREAM FULFILLED IN THE CENTENNIAL YEAR . . . . .	89
XX.	
THE CENTENNIAL . . . . .	93
XXI.	
THE FOUNDER . . . . .	94

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ST. MARY'S ISLE . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	Page
THOMAS, EARL OF SELKIRK . . . . .	12
JEAN, COUNTESS OF SELKIRK . . . . .	18
YORK FACTORY . . . . .	43
SEVEN OAKS MONUMENT . . . . .	69
LORD SELKIRK . . . . .	72
DUNBAR JAMES, SIXTH EARL OF SELKIRK . . . . .	80
BUST OF LORD SELKIRK . . . . .	90
THE PRESENT LADY SELKIRK . . . . .	94



## CHAPTER I

# THE GREAT DOUGLAS FAMILY

**A**NYONE who has read Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake" is impressed with the dignity and might of the Douglas, even in exile. But this Douglas was only one of a great family of brave and determined men. This was the family, with its branches and connections of Mar and Angus, from which Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk, sprang.

Scottish History records the valour of a Douglas who in the thirteenth century joined the great patriot, Sir William Wallace, and paid for his devotion with his life. Everyone who has read the ballad of Chevy Chase will remember the hardihood of the grandson of this last-named Douglas and his comrades, who fought at Otterburn :

"For Witherington then would I mourn  
As one in doleful dumps,  
For when his legs were smitten off,  
He fought upon his—stumps."

"Few of my ancestors," cried this Douglas, as he was dying, "died in chambers." They fell in battle. In the fourteenth century there was a masterful Douglas—Sir James—who was a bosom friend of King Robert Bruce, and did wonderful deeds of valour at Bannockburn. Making a foray into

England, this Douglas, leading 20,000 men, himself at the head of 200 horsemen, forced his way into the Royal Camp, and nearly succeeded in capturing the English King, Edward. After the death of Bruce, who always had it in his heart, when the stormy days of Scottish turbulence should be over, to go as a Crusader to the Holy Land, this Douglas felt it a sacred pledge given to his King to carry his dead heart in a silver casket to Palestine, and deposit it in the Holy Sepulchre. That his heart was thus taken from his body was, a few years ago, found to be no fiction, for, on exhuming Bruce's body in Dunfermline Abbey, it was seen that the breast-bone was sawn across. Sir James Douglas kept his promise, but on his way through Spain became involved in a fight with the Saracens. When his enemies seemed to be wavering in the face of his attack, the Douglas, to cause their confusion, threw the silver casket which he carried, ahead of him among his foes, crying out : " Go thee onward as thou wert wont, Douglas will follow thee or die." The Holy Land was never reached, but the heart of the Bruce was carried back to Scotland.

Even such heroism as this was to be exceeded by one of this great family, of the branch of Angus, in the warrior—in the time of James III. of Scotland—Archibald, known as " Bell the Cat." Those were troublous times. The King was weak, but tyrannical and overbearing. His nobles dreaded him, but none of them had the courage to face His Majesty and show the mailed fist. They repeated the well-known fable of the " Mice and the Cat." All failed but Sir Archibald, and the cowardly but grumbling nobles laid on him the duty of facing King James to declare their hostility and opposition. Sir Archibald carried their message to the King, stood up for the rights



of the grovelling crowd, and gained the title of "Archibald Bell-the-Cat."

To such a family belonged the fifth Earl of Selkirk ; and as we tell the story of his life, it will be for the reader to say whether in what should have been an age of education, personal liberty, and legal right, the Earl of Selkirk did not suffer as great danger, pain, and misery—even injustice and death itself—as did the Douglas of the stormy days of the good Sir James or the doughty Earl of Angus.

With such blood in his veins, our hero—for so we regard him—was born on June 20, 1771, in St. Mary's Isle, at the mouth of the River Dee, at Kirkcudbright, in the south-west of Scotland—a spot of beauty which we shall describe more fully. He was the seventh son of Dunbar, the fourth Earl of Selkirk, who assumed the name of Douglas. This Earl's large family of seven sons and six daughters were the children of Helen Douglas, daughter of Dunbar Hamilton of Baldoon, who brought the title to the Earl, and their family history was a very melancholy one. One after another they faded away. The brother older than Thomas grew up and gave promise of life and leadership. The junior title of the Earldom of Selkirk—of which we shall hear again—was that of Lord Daer, or, in full, Baron Daer and Shortcleugh. This was inherited by the eldest son of the family.

The family characteristic was that of a tall and slender form, evidently joined with delicate and uncertain health. In 1797 the sixth son, who was Lord Daer, died, when the most unlikely of all things occurred—the old Scottish superstition and prophecy of the "seventh son" came true. Thomas Douglas became Lord Daer, and two years later, at the age of twenty-eight, on the death of his father,

Dunbar Douglas, he became Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, and possessor of the honours, estates, and hereditaments of the noble house which had been created in 1646 and again constituted in 1688.

No member of the house of Selkirk crowded so much into a single life as did the young fifth Earl, who, from the time of his entering upon the Earldom till his death, twenty-one years after—when still a young man—gained a world-wide fame as the founder of New World settlements, as we shall see, in Prince Edward Island, Upper Canada, and Manitoba, and whose service and influence are shown in the occurrence of place-names in Canada, which commemorate him. The town of Selkirk in Red River, and the Dominion County of Selkirk, which includes the scenes of the early days of his settlement, and in which also is the Selkirk Island in Lake Winnipeg, point to his work, done a hundred years ago. The village of Selkirk marks the spot in Ontario where, before his Western experiment on Red River, he made an attempt to settle a number of his needy countrymen ; and Baldoon, the name of one of the Scottish properties of his father, speaks of a ten-year-long enterprise he sought to carry out in Dover and Chatham townships, amid the direful malaria of the shores of Lake St. Clair. Given in later times was the name Fort Selkirk in the old Yukon days, and a noble monument—worthy, timely, and deserved—was accorded him in naming after him the most picturesque and sublime range of British Columbia, the Selkirk Mountains. The fort erected in 1812 near the American boundary-line on Red River was Fort Daer.

On the landing of the Selkirk colonists, in 1812, which we shall more fully describe, we find in the Records that a few days after the party landed on

the banks of Red River, there was chosen for occupation "an extensive point of land through which fire had run and destroyed the wood, there being only burnt wood and weeds left." Here the first settlement was made, early in September 1812, and the tongue of land was called Point Douglas, in memory of Lord Selkirk's family name. Here Fort Douglas was afterwards built, and this is a most central spot in the great city of Winnipeg of to-day.

In all these is found a monument more enduring than brass.

## CHAPTER II

### LORD SELKIRK'S BIRTHPLACE

THE birthplace of Lord Selkirk was St. Mary's Isle, a beautiful sequestered spot, from which can be seen coming in the dashing waves of Solway Firth, so well described by Sir Walter Scott, in his story "Redgauntlet." The writer here spent a delightful week during the life of Dunbar Douglas, the sixth Earl, who was the son of the "Founder," as we shall often call Thomas, the fifth Earl. Here on that visit, the presiding genius of the house was Cecely Louisa, Countess of Selkirk, who married the Earl late in his life, and who still survives in good health, and is a faithful supporter of the fame and traditions of the house of Selkirk. On the decease of the last Earl of Selkirk, who died without issue in 1885, the titles and estates of the house of Selkirk, including the Earldom and the baronial title of Daer, were absorbed by the Duke of Hamilton. This seat of the Selkirk family is now the residence of Captain John Hope, R.N., grandson of the Founder on his mother's side.

St. Mary's Isle is an island of some hundreds of acres, formed by the silt deposited at its mouth by the River Dee. Cut off originally as an island from the mainland, it no doubt was occupied as a refuge in the old days of rapine and violence. Some parts of the residence, as seen in the Frontispiece still

remain, built into the walls of the house. These are of great solidity and thickness, some being six feet thick. It seems to have been a keep, or small fortress, and had no doubt considerable powers of resistance in barbarous times. It in some way fell into the possession of the monks, who for a long time inhabited it, under the name of St. Mary's Isle. In the east end of Edinburgh is to be seen a restored church, that of Restalrig, that for many years has been included in the parish of South Leith. This establishment was a Chantry, or Musical College, in the old days, and was possessed by the monks who owned St. Mary's Isle. The fragments of masonry and carving still preserved at Restalrig indicate an elaborate structure. How the monks of Restalrig obtained possession of St. Mary's Isle, on the very opposite side of Scotland, is not known. Perhaps some noted pirate or riever of the Middle Ages—scourge of the Solway Firth—may have left it to the gentle monks to atone for his misdeeds and repay them for singing requiems for his everlasting rest.

It was long after this time, however, when it came into the possession of the house of Selkirk.

At any rate, the mansion and its surroundings are now the abode of peace. The connection between the island and the mainland has been made permanent, and the carriage drive-way has made the island into a peninsula. St. Mary's Isle is now quite heavily wooded, and a number of fields upon it give good pasturage. It is thoroughly stocked with animals—indeed, it is overstocked with game. As the writer remembers it, in driving along the carriage-way to the mainland, hares and rabbits, partridges and pheasants, sprang or flew in numbers almost from under the carriage wheels. It was the custom of the last Earl, on the beginning of shooting, with

a few invited guests, to shoot one day over the island, and then all was peaceful for another year, and the game multiplied.

The mouth of the Dee and the shore-line of St. Mary's Isle, being without fortifications, were an inviting spot for rovers or pirates on the Irish Sea during the Seven Years' conflict, the American Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars. In the long-ago history of the American Revolution, on one occasion at least a dash was made upon St. Mary's Isle. This was in 1783, when John Paul, a native of Kirkcudbright, who had wandered as a reckless adventurer to various countries, and, developing great powers of bravery and leadership, had been placed in command of a warship, the *Ranger*, and given letters of marque. Though often called a pirate and freebooter, yet, finding himself in the Irish Sea, he made a raid upon his native shore, now having assumed the name of John Paul Jones. He captured St. Mary's Isle, with the intention, it is stated, of kidnapping the fourth Earl of Selkirk and holding him for a ransom from the British Government. Fortunately the Earl was absent from home at the time of the raid, and so the master of the *Ranger* missed his mark. Jones robbed the house of St. Mary's Isle of its valuables. The local tradition was that he had captured a great store of treasure, but more accurate statements declare that he did not secure more than a hundred pounds' worth of booty.

A local peasant-ballad in that part of the south country, dealing with the incident, runs as follows :

“Ye've all heard of Paul Jones,  
Have ye not? Have ye no?  
Ye've all heard of Paul Jones,  
Have ye no?”



Ye've all heard of Paul Jones,  
He was a rogue and vagabond,  
He was a rogue and vagabond,  
Was he no?

He entered Lord Selkirk's Hall,  
Did he not? Did he no?  
He entered Lord Selkirk's Hall,  
Did he no?

He entered Lord Selkirk's Hall,  
Stole the gold and jubals (jewels) all,  
Stole the gold and jubals all,  
Did he no?"

It is a matter of much interest to know that at St. Mary's Isle we get a glance of the social and literary life of the time. Probably not long after the invasion of Paul Jones, the ploughman-poet of Scotland, Robert Burns, was once a guest at St. Mary's Isle. The house of Selkirk at the time was Whiggish in its politics, and no doubt the Earl of Selkirk of the day was not among those who refused to honour the peasant bard. At table, the token of respect shown to Burns was a recognition of the opinion that the bard and the cleric were somewhat of the same ilk in Scotland. The Earl asked the poet to say Grace. The poet, unabashed, extemporised the following Grace, which may be found in his published works :

#### SELKIRK GRACE

"Some hae meat and canna eat,  
An' some wad eat that want it;  
But we hae meat, an' we can eat,  
And sae the Lord be thankit."

About the same time, Dugald Stewart, the great professor of Moral Philosophy, and something like "Christopher North," of the time, a species of literary dictator, was holding his temporary literary

encenium at Ayr, in the West of Scotland. As a friend of the professor, young Daer, an elder brother of Thomas Douglas, was a guest, and at this gathering the poet Burns was also present. The fact of such a high-born table companion as one of the house of Selkirk filled the poet with great glee, and in his rollicking humour he wrote the poem from which we clip a verse or two :

“ This wot ye all whom it concerns—  
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,  
October twenty-third,  
A ne’er to be forgotten day,  
Sae far I sprachled up the brae,  
I dinner’d wi’ a lord.”

Yes, wi’ a lord—stan’ out, my shin—  
A lord—a peer—an earl’s son—  
Up higher yet, my bonnet.  
And sic a lord—lang Scotch ells twa,  
Our peerage he o’erlooks them a’  
As I look o’er my sonnet.”

These are but glimpses of the life of St. Mary’s Isle, more than a century ago. They all show a breadth of sympathy, a largeness of soul, and a field of common sense from which we might expect to spring, in the sanctuary of St. Mary’s Isle, the noble-minded and enterprising man whom some have called a visionary, but whom we regard as the sane founder of Western Canada.



## CHAPTER III

### HIS EARLY LIFE

**A**S the youngest son of the Selkirk family, Thomas Douglas was the favourite of the family. He was born and passed through his boyhood in an exciting time in the history of the British Isles. He was five years old when the American Revolution began, and he belonged to a Whig family which took an interest in and had a great sympathy for the American colonists who were struggling for their liberties. His father, Dunbar Douglas, was a man of strong political feeling, and the appeals of Edmund Burke and the fervid eloquence of the younger Pitt stirred the whole family to a love for liberty and a hatred of tyranny. King George III. was no more popular among the majority of the British people than he was with the struggling colonists of Massachusetts or Virginia. The boy of fifteen, who had the prospect of having to take, as a younger son, to the Army, the Navy, or the Church, went at that age to Edinburgh University, which then, with the blaze of talent in the "Northern Athens," was plainly the most intellectual centre in Great Britain.

The young student had the faculty of making warm friends, for he was impulsive, ambitious, and idealistic. He was a classmate and all his life a

warm friend, of Walter Scott, Lord Abercromby, Clerk of Eldon, and a brilliant youth with the same family name as himself, David Douglas, afterwards Lord Reston. These and other kindred spirits in the University formed themselves into a literary society of nineteen, called "The Club," which met in a room in Carruber's Close, off the High Street, from which they adjourned to an oyster tavern in the neighbourhood. The high character of the youths may be seen when we hear of Walter Scott, in such an age as the end of the eighteenth century, declaring, "Depend upon it, of all vices, drinking is the most incompatible with greatness." Among this body there was the usual enthusiasm, unconventionality, and radicalism of the University student. Warmth of feeling, personal devotion, and a curious individuality of sentiment marked the youths, such as everyone who has gone through the University atmosphere recognises as kin to student life. Whenever any member of the select club received a reward or promotion of any kind, it was the rule that he should give a dinner to his associates. The regeneration of the world and of society was the very natural aim of these high-born youths in their irrepressible stage.

Being of an independent and original turn of mind, during the vacations of his University career, Thomas Douglas left the beaten track of pleasure of those days, and betook himself to the Highland glens of his native land. It may have been that some of the outlying scattered holdings of the Scottish estates were across the Firth, and thus a good distance from Kirkcudbright, or perhaps it was that the Highlander was the embodiment of the picturesque and the daring which attracted the romantic youth. The Highland chief was the most absolute



Thomas, Earl of Selkirk.

A black and white photograph showing a large, rectangular, light-colored object, possibly a piece of equipment or a container. The object has a textured surface and several small, dark, circular components or wires are visible on its top and side surfaces. The object is positioned horizontally and appears to be resting on a flat surface.

of rulers of his clan, but at the same time he was father of his people, the friend of the helpless, and the first to throw himself into the "imminent and deadly breach" in fight. In the garb of Old Gaul, with his pride of ancestry and devotion to his mother-tongue, the Highlander appealed to the imagination of the romantic young noblemen. With all these customs he sympathised; and in token of his interest, though of Southron blood, he undertook the study of the Gaelic language, and is said to have succeeded in speaking it.

But there was another feature of the Highlands which appealed to his tender and compassionate nature. The continued wars of Britain had brought financial loss upon the whole people. The nobles could not collect their rents, the peasantry had a miserable living, and there seemed little hope of improving the conditions of life. At this time was beginning the well-remembered "Highland Clearances," a movement to which tens of thousands of Highlanders in North America look back as the time when their lands were taken from them—lands in which, with the Celtic notion of clan-possession, they believed they had a right. Great sheep-runs took the place of the shielans and crofts of those who crossed the ocean, to sing "Lochaber no more." This state of things appealed strongly to young Thomas Selkirk. The relief of his countrymen and other sufferers became a passion with him, and gave a clue to some of the phases of his after-life which some persons find it hard to explain. Thus we find it recorded that, at the close of his University career, he took an extensive tour through the wild Highland region, and "explored many of its remotest and most secluded valleys."

France at this time, in the last decade of the

eighteenth century, was an interesting problem for the friends of liberty in all European countries. The American Revolution had thrown the sparks of liberty into the tyrannies and immoralities of Old France. But in France the conflagrations had become alarming. The French people had not the solidity and saving common sense of the Anglo-Saxon communities of North America. Like most of those of the liberty-loving people in Great Britain, such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others, young Douglas crossed over to France, and there, amid the disturbances and ferment, saw a leaderless populace and the fruits of the wild theories of the Jacobins. Dissatisfied with France, and, as he tells us afterwards, alienated from the pleasing theories of optimistic popular government, he came back to betake himself for a time to the Highland Straths, where he might have sung to him the praises of "Evan's, Donald's fame," and hear again "the sounding pibroch." Taken up thus for five or six years after he had come of age, the young nobleman had time to settle down to the later culture that follows the College course, and brings the thinking man to look more dispassionately at the problems of human life.

Thomas Selkirk became, on the death of his only surviving brother, Baron Daer and Shortcleugh, with, should he live, the high honours of the Earldom as his reversion. In two years his father died, and at the age of twenty-eight, in the year 1799, Thomas Douglas came into all the wealth, titles, and estates which had been bestowed a century and a half before, in 1646, by the hand of Charles I. upon a branch of the house of Angus, as Earl of Selkirk.



## CHAPTER IV

### A NOBLE DREAMER

**L**ORD SELKIRK came of a perfervid race, and his University training had but enlarged his view and led him to long to leave the ordinary and uneventful path of a commonplace life. It is a good thing for the world that the young men should see visions and even the old men dream dreams. He began the nineteenth century with high hopes for the future, and provided by station and means to undertake large and important schemes.

Like Ulysses on Ithaca, the young noble was able to say :

“ Yet all experience is an arch where thro’  
Gleams that untravell’d world whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause to make an end,  
To rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use !  
As tho’ to breathe were life.”

His ambition seems to have been toward helping his fellow-countrymen, hungry and wretched, driven from their crofts, and having no gleam of sunshine to brighten their paths. To him it seems no hardship to cross the sea.

Again like Ulysses :

“ There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail :  
There gloom the dark blue seas.

’Tis not too late ; seek a newer world ;  
Push off, and, sitting well in order, smite  
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset.”

Lord Selkirk has no fear ; he dreams success.

In the year 1802 he wrote a letter to Lord Buckinghamshire, Colonial Secretary, seeking permission to establish a colony in America. Residents of Manitoba may read with interest what he said of their land more than a century ago, when all the world declared that there was nothing but snow and ice. He said :

“ At the western extremity of Canada, upon the waters which fall into Lake Winnipeg, and, uniting with the great river of Port Nelson, discharge themselves into Hudson Bay, is a country which the Indian traders represent as fertile and of a climate far more temperate than the shores of the Atlantic under the same parallel, and not more severe than that of Germany and Poland. . . . To a colony in these territories the channel of trade must be the river of Port Nelson.”

But to the ardent petition of the “ visionary ” young Earl, the only response was that “ the Colonial Secretary could not favour the scheme, because the prejudices of the British people were so strong against emigration.”

The necessity of providing soldiers for the Napoleonic Wars led Britain to feel that she could not willingly let any of her people go abroad. Especially hot do we find Lord Selkirk against the Highland Society for opposing his suggestion.



But the emigrants would go. They had gone to Glengarry and to Pictou in British America, and to numerous places in the United States. Thus prevented from sending out emigrants, the thought came to Lord Selkirk's mind that he might be patriotic by bringing back British settlers to Canada who had gone to the United States.

In his correspondence, of which we have now full measure, we find that he began a great scheme by correspondence with the Bishop of Dromore, Newry, Ireland, Rev. Dr. Flynn of Sligo, and several other bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, to found an Irish colony near Sault Ste Marie, in Upper Canada. Obstacles again prevented this from culminating in anything. Then again he fell back upon his plan of repatriating British settlers from the United States. To forward this plan, some short time after his letter of 1802 to the Colonial Secretary, he purchased a block of land on the shores of Lake St. Clair in Upper Canada, and here brought a number of settlers' families—McDonalds, Mackenzies, McDougalls, McCallums, Morrisons, McPhersons, McLeans, and the like. This settlement he named after the estate possessed by Dunbar Hamilton before he married the Selkirk heiress of Baldoon. Of this we shall speak later.

Returning again to his dream of settling Red River, we find him once more thwarted in his plan of colonising on Lake Winnipeg, and he is compelled to keep faith with eight hundred emigrants by taking them in ships to Prince Edward. Of this colony also we shall have more to say. Meanwhile we wonder at his lordship's pluck and perseverance.

Though Lord Selkirk never gave up his plans of emigration, even with the English Government and Downing Street against him, yet, as a patriot, he

was much taken up with the state of Britain. The three years beginning with 1805 were terrible years for Britain—years of the most acute danger and of most torturing dread as to the career of the peace-destroying Napoleon. Britain was in terrible straits. They trembled at the “singular ability with which all Napoleon’s enterprises were concerted.” From his seat in the House of Lords Lord Selkirk enunciated his plan of a citizen soldiery as the only hope for the defence of Britain.

We may suppose that for a time in the year 1807 Lord Selkirk was somewhat pacified, for we find that in that year he was married. His wife was Jean, daughter of James Wedderburn-Colville of Ochiltree. His wife, according to the testimony of many persons in later years, was a faithful and devoted helpmeet. With his three children, we find her accompanying his lordship in later years to America, and passing the winter of 1816 in Montreal.

But domestic joys could not keep him long from the public responsibility he felt for his country. In 1808 he published his plan of armed protection for England in a book, “On the Necessity of a more Effectual System of National Defence.” This work was so highly regarded by the English people, that in consequence of its importance, the Royal Society, which is very chary in distributing its honours, made him a Fellow (F.R.S.). Although an editor, in republishing the work half a century later, speaks of the author as “a remarkable man who had the misfortune to live before his time,” his plan to us now looks simple enough, in the days of “Territorial Militia” in Great Britain and the Volunteer Militia in Canada. In 1808 he estimated that in the population of eleven millions then in Britain, there were about 600,000 men between the ages of eighteen



Jean, Countess of Selkirk.

1000

1000

1000

and twenty-five. This young men's contingent Lord Selkirk would drill in four periods of three months each in the year. Suitable time would be chosen for the agriculturalists and fishermen, and the officers would have the same time of drill as the men.

About this time also (1809), Lord Selkirk stated in a public letter that his father and brother had both been Liberals and favourable to Parliamentary Reform. Our Lord Selkirk tells how the anarchy of France, the cry of discontent of a senseless democracy in the American Republic, and even some features of public life in Britain, had led him to change his views. From this time he became a Conservative, and so the house of Selkirk continued even to the death of the sixth Earl in 1885, who was the staunchest of the staunch in his political opinions. As we shall see, however, the first decade of the nineteenth century was a time of earnest thought to Earl Thomas, and we shall follow the working out of his great emigration projects.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SETTLERS BY THE SEA

**I**N his emigration scheme, an account of which was published by Lord Selkirk in his book on "Emigration," in 1805, the coloniser was very successful. Unable to induce the British Government to favour a colony in the interior of North America, his lordship found the way clear to land them on unoccupied territory along the sea-coast of the British colonies on the Atlantic Ocean. In the Gulf of St. Lawrence lay Prince Edward Island, which had been partially occupied by old Acadian or French settlers, who had deserted it and left their clearings on the east side of the island, in what is known to-day as the Belfast District. The strip of land was on the coast, could be reached directly by the emigrant ship, and was separated from any other settlement by an arm of the sea, the colony stretching along for thirty miles.

The settlers were almost entirely Highlanders, many from the Isle of Skye, but a number also from Ross, Inverness, and Argyll shires. They were brought out from Scotland in three ships, all of which sailed a few days apart during the month of August 1803. Though Lord Selkirk was delayed in starting, yet fairly good arrangements had been made for giving immediate temporary shelter to the



settlers among the young clumps of trees which had grown since the evacuation of the French settlers. The thickets of young trees gave a pleasing protection to their settlements. Though arrangements for the land led Lord Selkirk to go to Charlottetown, yet he arrived in the colony by the time the third vessel had reached the island, and had his tent pitched at the end of the camp. This action of his lordship was very encouraging to his Highland dependents. He was really their new chieftain.

The camp was of necessity somewhat confused. To allow the vessels to return, the baggage was all taken out and piled up beside the temporary houses, which were made of wooden poles covered with branches of abundant spruces. At night the fires built along the whole extent of settlement among the clumps of trees cast long shadows, and appealed to the fears and superstitions of the forlorn Celts in their new situation. To the sensitive or the ignorant the novelties met within a new settlement in the Western world are neither pleasant nor encouraging.

The presence of his lordship helped very much in the distribution of the lands to the different holders. The lands had not been surveyed, and quarrels arose between the new occupants as to the boundary-line. The busybodies from among the older settlers in the neighbourhood suggested doubts and uncertainties in the minds of the simple crofters as to the titles of the property and the equity of division, and the Earl of Selkirk, as made plain by the mass of correspondence as to the boundaries and tenure of their lots, showed that the doubts suggested were far from groundless.

Eight hundred settlers is by no means a small body to feed on an island which at the time pro-

duced few crops, because the markets were poor. Flour came to the island by boats from Nova Scotia, and, as the supply was scanty, the prices rose, so that many of the families had not enough to supply their hunger. Behind the spectre of poverty may almost always be seen following the terrible avenger, disease. Fever broke out among the colonists, and had it not been that a skilful and attentive doctor had been brought by Lord Selkirk, many deaths would have followed. As it was, there were very few fatalities. Thus the consequences of exposure and the features of a new climate were happily overcome by foresight and promptitude.

Amusing incidents are very common in new states of society, and along the frontier of settlement. Lord Selkirk relates such comicalities as that of an old Highlander of sixty and his three sons, who had a wooded farm. With true Celtic venturesomeness, the father undertook to cut down trees, for which, the Psalmist says, in the olden time a man became famous according as he could cut down a tree of some thickness. The old gentleman's ardour was cooled by his sons hiding the axe and thus saving the octogenarian from cutting off his own and other people's limbs. An aged widow of eighty years, in the absence of her two sons, was so zealous that she undertook alone to hew down a monarch of the forest. They only reached home in time to prevent her bringing it down upon herself and crushing both their mother and their shanty.

Some of the settlers were those who had seen better days, and these are generally those who make the poorest settlers. An exception was that of one who had owned the property of Auchtertyre in Scotland, but had lost it. With great energy he



laboured and regained, if not the old inheritance, at least a New World replica of the ancient Ross-shire holding of his well-to-do ancestors.

The descendants of Lord Selkirk's Highland settlers have many tales to tell of the tall and impressive figure of the Earl as he lived among them. His affability, fairness, and generosity have left a flavour after him which the promoters and leaders of other colonies might well desire to have. The descendants of the people of this colony have greatly increased, until it is said four thousand people in Prince Edward Island claim to be descendants of the colony of 1803. They have spread westward over Canada, and in the Far West the writer has met many of them who honoured the name of Selkirk. The mass of correspondence in connection with the clearing up of the intricate titles of Lord Selkirk's Prince Edward Island property may be seen in the Canadian archives at Ottawa, and a still more thorough search can be made in the Registry Office of the Government Buildings of Charlottetown, the capital of Prince Edward Island. This may be said, that the Prince Edward Island settlers of 1803, in their religious life, their industrious character, and their intelligent appreciation, have never brought any shame upon the name of the great Founder.

## CHAPTER VI

### FIRST VISIT TO CANADA

**T**HE first steps in planting his Prince Edward Island Colony, after a month or two of hard work, having been completed, Lord Selkirk crossed from the island to the United States, and was much interested in the problems of the New World. The Republic had begun its career in his own lifetime, and it had not yet reached one generation of its existence. A number of serious problems were at this time vexing the loosely connected States of the Union. While recognising the energy and the skill which had brought the Thirteen British Colonies together, yet the thing that concerned him most was the diversion of British emigration away from under the British flag in Canada to settle in the States. He states that he met numbers of "families from Scotland and Wales" in New England and the State of New York. He found numbers of them disappointed with their new homes, and willing, if conditions were favourable, to come back again under the old flag in Canada.

But the dream which had possessed him for several years of building up Canada led to his leaving the United States and proceeding to Toronto and Montreal. At this time (1803) Upper Canada was chiefly a wilderness, but Montreal was an

interesting, though not a large city. It was the business centre of Canada, and of that industry which was the only lucrative business in Canada, the Fur Trade. In Montreal, on his arrival, Lord Selkirk received an ovation. His rank, wealth, intelligence, breadth of mind, and success in settling so quickly and successfully his Prince Edward Island Highlanders, recommended him to the fur-traders—the McTavishes, Mackenzies, McGillivrays, and the rest—his own countrymen. The late Governor Masson, in his "*Bourgeois de Nord-Ouest*," says: "Lord Selkirk was received with open arms in Montreal. His reputation had preceded him, and all regarded it as an honour to be allowed to entertain him. The *bourgeois* of the North-West Company, who hold the highest place in the English society of Montreal, and among whom the Scottish element predominated, were the first to offer him the abundant hospitality for which they were distinguished."

The centre of influence and standing in Montreal was the "Beaver Club." It had been in existence twenty years before his visit, and was then made up of twenty members. The Club was exclusive, consisting entirely of the fur-trading officers who had seen service in the far North-West. The club-house was a place beautifully fitted up; its silver and glass ware were not equalled in Canada, and shone with resplendence. A gold medal, with the motto engraved upon it, "Fortitude in Distress," was worn at their feasts by each of the members, and they might well be called the "Lords of the North." Their banquets were unique. Venison, pemmican, bear, and beaver, all served after the manner of the *pays en haut* or Upper Country, where they had seen adventure. Scottish songs

and Highland dances were intermingled with their jollity ; and when wine added to their exhilaration, in the early hours of the morning, “ partners, factors and traders, in the sight of all the servants or *voyageurs* who happened to gain admittance, engaged in the *grand voyage*, which consisted in all seating themselves in a row one behind the other on the rich carpet, each armed with tongs, poker, sword, or walking-stick to serve as paddle, and in boisterous manner singing a *voyageur's* song, ‘ Malbrouck ’ or ‘ A la Claire Fontaine,’ while they paddled as regularly as the excited state of their nerves would allow.”

Though such display might have been regarded as barbaric by his lordship, yet, as a man of active mind and broadly trained tastes in his Highland experience, he endured them in order to learn the spirit, objects, and ambitions of the gay but clear-headed business men of the Fur Company. In later years, when the coloniser found himself, as we shall see, in conflict with these traders of the North-West Fur Company, it was the custom to represent Lord Selkirk's visit to Montreal as that of a spy coming to learn their affairs under the guise of friendship.

There seems no ground for this suspicion. He was not yet interested (1803) in any Hudson Bay Company Fur Trader's affairs ; he had probably no thought that he would ever interfere with the Fur Trade, or come into conflict with British subjects, as they and he both were. His love of the picturesque, his romantic disposition, and his wide interest in all things human are a sufficient reason for his attention to what was then the most important feature of Canadian life—the Fur Trade. That there was no motive of his ever interfering with

the Fur Trade or antagonising the North-Westerns, may be seen in that he extended his journeys into other parts of Canada, and was really engaged in making inquiries into the status of Upper Canada and the development of emigration projects which could in no way interfere with the North-West Company or the Fur Trade. With these enterprises we may deal in another chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FEVER AT BALDOON

WE shall have to turn back upon our track to follow the Earl of Selkirk through his Canadian experiences. When his lordship saw the Prince Edward Island Colony established, he went to New York, and, finding his way through that State, on November 15, 1803, reached Buffalo Creek, now Buffalo City, on the frontier. He crossed the Niagara River to Queenston, and there met the famous proprietor and landlord, Colonel Talbot, returning from Toronto to his estate at Dunwich. Crossing over Lake Ontario, he visited York, now Toronto; and, speaking of its roads, he said, "called streets, infamous and almost impassable." In the swampy district at the mouth of the river, *ci-devant* Toronto River, then the Don, fever and ague were very bad, while it was said that two or three miles up Yonge Street there was none.

On January 13 he reached Kingston, and met the leading man of the town, Squire Cartwright. From Cornwall the river was crossed to St. Regis, to visit Colonel McDonnell's house. In the Scottish settlement of Glengarry his lordship listened on Sunday to the preaching of the famous Presbyterian chaplain, Rev. John Bethune, the father of Bishop Bethune,



and afterwards had a long conversation with the old U.E. Loyalist. Reaching Montreal on January 24, 1804, he paid a visit to Quebec by sleigh, over road and frozen river. For two weeks Lord Selkirk enjoyed the hospitality of which we have spoken at the hands of the Lords of the North in Montreal. In all these journeys the Diary of his lordship is full of information, with remarks and criticisms showing a keen and observing mind.

Going south again to the United States, Lord Selkirk made the same full inquiry into social, financial, and industrial conditions in Vermont, Connecticut, and New York States that he showed in going through Canada. His description of the people, their customs, and their opportunities for development is interesting. He was impressed with the state of discontent that was then prevailing in New England and the adjoining States. No doubt there was with him the underlying purpose of inquiry as to the likelihood of inducing the British-born to emigrate to Canada. He did obtain an official for his Baldoon enterprise in a Mr. Farquharson, and secured a few settlers for his colony in Upper Canada. Omitting his travels in the United States, we find him again at Buffalo Creek, ready to cross the Niagara River at Black Rock, on May 22, 1804, in order to reach York on the 27th.

The Earl had evidently made up his mind to visit what was to be the most unfortunate of all his colonies, viz. that in Upper Canada. He went to the Fond du Lac, or Head of the Lake, where Hamilton now stands, and found his way up the mountain to what was then a place of some importance, the village of Ancaster. Here he was the guest of the head of Hatt's Distillery; and while here he was honoured by a visit from the great chief of the

Mohawks—Joseph Brant. Lord Selkirk gives some interesting statements as to the character and dealings of the crafty and mysterious old red man. Passing westward, Lord Selkirk crossed the Grand River, and took shelter at "Maloney's" farm in Burford. Maloney was then carrying on a political campaign against the Ryersons, of Norfolk County. From Burford he then went on to Ingersoll, then called also Oxford-on-the-Thames. Embarking on a small vessel on the Thames, he went to the few houses then newly called London, and then on to the settlement founded by him, already spoken of as Baldoon, in the townships of Dover and Chatham, on the shores of Lake St. Clair.

To the colony of Baldoon was brought a nucleus of some twenty families from Prince Edward Island, and also a number of families from the United States. For ten years the most distressing events took place in this settlement. His trusted manager fell a victim to the deadly fever. The deaths and disappointments made a miserable community, and the accounts of advances and assistance given to the poor settlers make pages and pages of accounts among Lord Selkirk's papers. True, drainage and public improvements have changed this district into a prosperous settlement, but for years superstition surrounded the community of being leagued with the Evil One. The sheriff of the Home District, Alexander Macdonell, one of the best administrators to be found, was employed by his lordship at great expense. Not only for the whole decade of its existence was Baldoon a burden, but when the American War of 1812 came, being near the border, it was occupied by the American troops after the tide had turned against Britain on the Detroit frontier, and heavy losses were again incurred.



It is remarkable that Lord Selkirk did not for a whole decade come out again to see his colonists in Prince Edward Island or Baldoon. With great public spirit, Lord Selkirk felt himself bound to help not only the colonists of his Canadian estate, but also to advance the interests of the whole province. In 1804, being greatly impressed with the vileness of the highways of the province (we have seen that he expressed himself strongly in regard to the streets of Toronto), he made a proposition to the Government of Upper Canada to build a main highway from Amherstburg, near Baldoon, down to Toronto, a distance of nearly three hundred miles.

The estimated cost of the road was £40,000 sterling. As the province was poor, the Earl of Selkirk offered Governor Hunter to build the road and to accept as payment wild lands on each side of the road to be constructed. To the Government of the time, which overestimated the value of the lands, the price seemed to be too great, though many have thought that the province made a mistake in its refusal.

In 1805 the Earl purchased the township of Moulton from among the Indian lands, near the mouth of the Grand River. The price of the township was some £3,000 or £4,000. Like Baldoon, the Grand River township was marshy and unsuitable for settlement, but has become, with cultivation, valuable and prosperous. Yet during all these years of vast expense to his lordship, with practically no returns, the Scottish nobleman was exercised in mind over the miseries of the poor. That it was not mere clannishness is shown that not only did Lord Selkirk try to help his Highland fellow-countrymen of his own religious faith, but in every project he was anxious to help the suffering people of Ireland. He

was willing to give them every religious opportunity by sending out Protestant or Catholic clergymen as the case might be, and providing for their support.

In 1809 the state of Great Britain was one of despair, and, though the losses and disappointments of his seven years of promoting emigration had been so great, yet there was in him the undying Promethean fire that would not allow him to admit failure or to cease in his endeavour to help suffering humanity.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE EARL'S GREAT ENTERPRISE

**W**E have now seen enough of the Earl of Selkirk to know something of his character and mental qualities. At the age of thirty-six he was happily married, as we have said, to Jean, daughter of James Wedderburn-Colville, of Ochiltree. His wife proved a strong supporter in his plans, brought a considerable family influence to assist him, and to them were born three children : (1) Dunbar James, who became the sixth and last Earl of Selkirk ; (2) Isabella Ellen, who married Charles Hope, son of the third Earl of Hopetoun, whose son is Captain John Hope, R.N., the present occupant of St. Mary's Isle ; (3) Katharine Jane, who married Loftus Wigram. We shall see that the sixth Earl married Cecely Louise, who still survives.

Notwithstanding his happy married life and the possession of ample means, which would have enabled him to lead a refined and peaceful life as a man of letters and a model landlord, yet the Founder had a restlessness and a desire for exploits which made such a life seem to him one of sloth and uselessness. It was this quality of mental activity which caused his opponents in the North-West Company to call him "visionary." To those, who had begun life

in the Fur Company with no fortune and with all still before them, the ideal was to make hard journeys, take up new posts strenuously, oppose the Hudson Bay Company, and, when forty years of that had passed, retire to Montreal, Brockville, or even to St. Andrews, Scotland, or the Orkneys, and enjoy *otium cum dignitate*. Such a life would have been repugnant to Lord Selkirk.

In his journey in the United States and Canada, in 1803-4, his interest in every side of life, as shown in his copious Diary, is surprising. Land, agriculture, populations, trade, political and social conditions, mines, forests, and many other subjects are fully dealt with, and elaborate statistics and calculations are introduced which show a marvellous power of thought and industry. His was a fertile mind. Difficulties which would have deterred other men were to him of little account. His patriotism was very strong, his pity for the poor and suffering was an unusually marked feature of his whole life—he was generous and obliging to a fault. Nor does ambition or the desire of renown seem to have been the basis of his intellectual and moral work. The writer has had opportunities of making a close study—more close than any other writer—of the life and motives of his lordship, and while he would have admired in him a greater repose of mind and a more cautious and conciliatory temper in his great projects, yet he believes that a settled desire for active and inspiring work and a high moral purpose to benefit and relieve his fellow-men were the dominant motives of Lord Selkirk's life, which closed all too soon—before he had reached the age of fifty.

Change of occupation was necessary for him, and, though he had a vast and irritating correspondence in connection with his Prince Edward Island scheme

and Baldoon colonies, yet when his Militia scheme, his book on Emigration, and two considerable publications, anonymous, but generally attributed to him, on the Indians of North America, ceased to satisfy his mental cravings, he thought of a gigantic and comprehensive plan, on a new line, of helping the Highland and Irish peasantry who were his countrymen.

In the year after his marriage we find in Lord Selkirk's mind what seems to be the germ of the great scheme which has made his name historic. The existence of three Fur Companies in Rupert's Land—the North-West Company, the New North-West Company, usually known as the XY Company, and the Hudson Bay Company—during the years extending from 1796–1804, had entirely demoralised the Fur Trade. Rapine, murders, the sale of whisky to the Indians, trade jealousy, had all led to the injury of the trade; and though the North-West and XY Companies had united in 1804, yet the jealousy in their United Company and their rivalry with the Hudson Bay Company had largely diminished their profits and destroyed their trade. Hudson Bay Company stock had fallen to a low point.

In 1808 we are told that Lord Selkirk began to buy up the stock of the Hudson Bay Company. Lady Selkirk's relations seem to have been connected with Hudson Bay Company affairs. This purchase did not disturb the minds of the Hudson Bay Company or Nor'-Westers to any great extent, for they spoke of his lordship as a "kind-hearted but eccentric Scottish nobleman." But this "kind-hearted" man knew that "during the fifteen years which preceded Waterloo the population of Britain rose from ten to thirteen millions, the rate of wages fell, the price of wheat rose, and famine and death

looked the poor in the face. The poor rate rose 50 per cent., and the increase of poverty was followed by crime."

This state of things in 1809 urged his lordship to action, and in that year he determined, though he should involve himself in financial obligations, he would meet the evils of this alarming poverty. From five distinguished lawyers he learned that the grant of Charles II.'s charter to the Hudson Bay Company was good, and that it would cover a vast region of the North American Continent whose streams ran into Hudson Bay. Their legal opinion was that the Act of 1670 fully provided for the possession, government, and administration of the vast region known as Rupert's Land.

Lord Selkirk, nothing startled by the magnitude of the undertaking, undertook to buy up a controlling interest in the stock of the Hudson Bay Company, the famous Company that for a hundred and fifty years had sent its ships laden with English goods to barter with the Indians for the furs brought to the shores of the Bay, down thousands of miles of river, in canoes, to the posts of York Factory and Fort Churchill. With the assistance of his relations and friends, the money was found to buy up £35,000 worth of the whole capital of £105,000. The eventful day came on May 30, 1811, when some £30,000 worth of the stock, out of £45,000 present, was found to be in the hands of Wedderburn, Mainwaring, Berens, and Pelly, all friends of Lord Selkirk. There were three Nor'-Westers present—Sir Alexander Mackenzie, John Inglis, and Edward Ellice, but they only held £2,500 of stock, and even this had been bought too late to be of any avail.

The meeting being assembled, Lord Selkirk made a most important proposition to the Hudson Bay

Company, viz. that while in no way interfering with the Fur Trade, they should sell to him, as a private individual, a large tract of land for him to colonise and administer, they being free of the expense of transport, of outlay for the settlers, of government, of protection, and of the quieting the Indian title to the land. The Company accepted his offer, and sold to him 116,000 square miles of fertile territory. This district, called by his lordship Assiniboine, covered modern Manitoba and a part of Minnesota and North Dakota States. It was twice the size of England and Wales.



## CHAPTER IX

### THREE SHIPS SET SAIL FOR YORK FACTORY

THE "impulsive and visionary" Earl, as his rivals called him, had shown great courage and consummate skill in purchasing and controlling one of the oldest and strongest financial organisations of his time—the Hudson Bay Company. He had done this also in the teeth of three of the most influential of the fur traders from Montreal, who thread the rivers and reap the furs of the far-away Saskatchewan and Mackenzie Rivers. And now the coloniser begins his work of gathering settlers. He has prepared an attractive prospectus, inviting especially the Highland and Irish crofters who were in poverty to go to his land of the setting sun. He promises life, health, and happiness to those who join him, and shows how, free from taxes and on land of their own, they may make comfortable homes for themselves and their children. He can point to the success of eight hundred of their countrymen who left Britain in 1803, and in Prince Edward Island have done well.

But the poor are timid, isolated, and lacking in hope and courage, so that he is compelled to choose men who have seen the New World and who may explain to the emigrants the conditions of their



future life in the colonies. Colin Robertson, a Highlandman who had been an officer in the North-West Company, and, being a returned Scotsman, could explain the features of the new land of hope, was engaged to go among the Highland people. Captain Roderick McDonald, another man of Celtic blood and experience, was sent to Glasgow; and Miles Macdonnell, who was a Canadian Highlander, and was to be the leader of the colony, visited Ireland and sought for emigrants from the Emerald Isle. Just before their starting, the *Inverness Journal*, no doubt influenced by Sir Alexander Mackenzie and other Nor'-Westers, printed for distribution a letter showing the dangers ahead, the hardships of the country, the cunning of the agents, and charging Lord Selkirk's scheme as a purely mercenary one.

Meanwhile Lord Selkirk, moved to greater exertion by the unjust opposition of the Nor'-Westers, and supplying personally the means for obtaining the emigrants, as well as for their support and transport, secured vessels to carry out for the Hudson Bay Company a large number of employees from the Orkneys and also a ship for the emigrants. Three ships were fitted out in London. There were the *Prince of Wales* and the *Eddystone*, for the Hudson Bay Company work, and an old vessel of rather poor type, the *Edward and Ann*, for the conveyance of the colonists. Sailing from Gravesend, the vessels were seriously delayed by stormy weather, but, running up the east coast of England and Scotland, they reached Stromness, a seaport of the Orkneys, where the *Prince of Wales* remained, while the other two vessels sailed to Stornaway in the Island of Lewis. Here the emigrants were to be taken on board,

Now the real troubles began. The Collector of Customs was a relative of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Lord Selkirk's chief rival, and the most despicable means were taken to prevent the colonists from going to America. A number of colonists on board the ship were worked upon and were induced to enlist as soldiers, whereupon they were arrested and taken from the ships. Miles Macdonell, who was in command, was in dire distress. Joined by the *Prince of Wales*, the other two vessels, with their companies greatly reduced by desertion and coercion, sailed for the New World on July 26, 1811. As this was in the very heat of the Napoleonic Wars between England and France the Government sent out with the three vessels sailing to Hudson Bay a man-of-war, which acted as escort and protector until the little fleet had reached a point some four hundred miles north-west of Ireland, when the convoy returned to Britain. A Catholic priest, Father Burke, accompanied the party for their religious protection, and Mr. Edward, a medical man, to cure their bodily ailments. The sea voyage was exceptionally long and boisterous until they had entered Hudson Strait, when the weather, we are informed, turned mild, and the great rocky walls of the Strait reminded the emigrants of the stony coast of Sutherlandshire which they had left behind them.

Miles Macdonell, in his reports to Lord Selkirk, states that exclusive of the officers and crew who embarked at Gravesend, there were of labourers and writers one hundred and five persons on board. Fifty-three of these were in the *Edward and Ann*—the vessel containing the emigrants. It had been intended that the *Eddystone* should leave a number of the Hudson Bay Company workmen at Fort Churchill, but she was unable to reach that port,

and, following in the wake of the other two vessels, with them landed her passengers at York Factory. The vessels arrived in port on September 24, having taken sixty-one days from Stornoway to this Factory at the mouth of the Nelson River. This was declared by the Hudson Bay Company officers to be the longest passage ever known to Hudson Bay. The settlers and employees were all landed at the point near York Factory, and were for the time being given shelter in tents on the shore. On October 5 the lonely and homesick passengers saw the three ships sail away to face the floating ice which to some extent they would meet on their way back to London.

## CHAPTER X

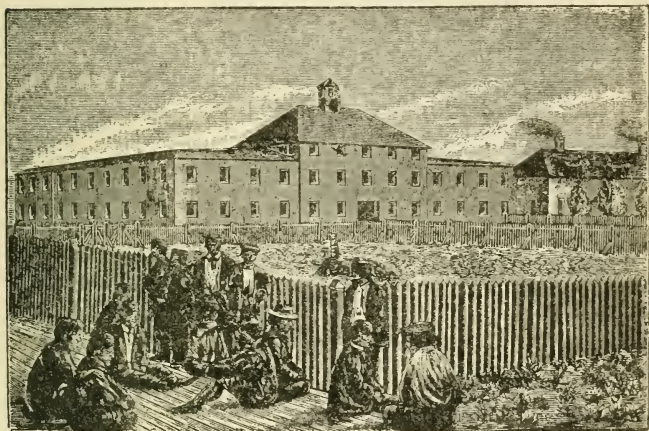
### COLD WINTER AT YORK FACTORY

**T**HE desolate colonists are now left lonely enough on the shore of Hudson Bay. As it is late in the year, the icy winter is at hand ; and though Miles Macdonell wrote on October 5 from York Factory, " The weather has been mild and pleasant for some days past," yet it will not do to trifle with the nip of the north wind on the shore of Hudson Bay after the month of October.

York Factory was, a hundred years ago, a place of some importance. But except the few huts for the workmen and a number of Indian families the whole life of the place was in the Fort or Factory, as the Hudson Bay Company, imitating the East India Company, called some of their trading houses. Two rivers, the Nelson and the Hayes, enter by one basin into Hudson Bay at this point, the Nelson the more northerly and more rocky, the southern, the Hayes, the more navigable. Between the two rivers is a delta, or low swampy tongue of land. On the north bank of the Nelson, the land near the Bay is low, but inland it rises to a considerable height. During the long period since the occupation of the region by the Hudson Bay Company in 1670, there have been some half-dozen sites built upon, each one known as York Factory. At the time of

the arrival of the party of Lord Selkirk's settlers, the Factory was more than half a mile from the Bay, and lay between the two rivers.

Governor Miles Macdonell, as we now must call him, states that it was on "low, miry ground, without a ditch." The buildings of the Factory were badly planned, and so were not suitable for sheltering the newly arrived people. Besides this, Governor Cook,



York Factory

of the Factory, and Factor Auld, present from Fort Churchill, represented the old fur trading spirit, which was averse to colonisation, and so decided that colonists were an evil not to be endured in the Fort. The poor colonists seem to have no friends. Governor Miles Macdonell berates them for indolence, and finds them awkward as workmen ; but Macdonell is a Canadian, and the Orkney men to him seem very slow.

After full counsel was taken, it was decided to

build barracks or quarters for the colonists on the higher ground north of the Nelson River. Spruce-trees of some size were found growing along the river, and good logs were obtained and comfortable buildings soon built of these. The village on this new site was called "Nelson Encampment." Though the winter set in in earnest in November, yet Governor Macdonell writes on the 29th of the month: "A mild day enables us to send a boat across the Nelson with the Express." It was open water in the river.

Being experienced in the wilds of the New World, Governor Macdonell was on his guard against the annoying disease, scurvy, to which new immigrants are liable. The doctor had provided various remedies, but as the people were living chiefly on salt provisions, it was not long before one third of the colonists were down with scurvy. After all, the most potent remedy of the Canadian woods was resorted to, *i.e.* the juice of the spruce-tree. The Orkneymen were very unwilling to take the spruce-tree potion, but the rule was carried out. Indeed, the Orkneymen were found to be very untractable, and it is recorded that the Irish colonists, on the New Year's Evening of 1812, showed their warlike tendencies by "unmercifully beating some Orkneymen."

A very annoying riot took place in connection with the attempt to make an obstreperous Orkneyman, named Finlay, drink the spruce decoction. He was dropped from work, but persisted in his opposition to regulations. Magistrate Hillier, one of the Governor's staff, sentenced Finlay to confinement. There being no prison available, under the orders of the Governor a single log-hut was built, and in this the prisoner was kept. However, the prisoner was popular, and all his friends, being the



contingent from Orkney and Glasgow, numbering thirteen in all, set fire to the new building, and as it burnt rescued the prisoner.

Governor Macdonell and Magistrate Hillier tried to bring the culprits to justice, but the rebels carried off Finlay, and for three months were, under the name of "insurgents," refused rations by the Governor. They were compelled to walk all the way to the Factory and obtain provisions at their own cost. Governor Macdonell intended to send them home to Britain in the spring. One of the charges against the rebels was that they had taken five or six stand of firearms belonging to the colony, and would not give them up. In June the rebels, on going over to the Factory as usual, crossed the Nelson River, and were unable, on account of high water, to go back to their place of resort. The officer in charge at the Factory, Mr. Auld, refused to give them supplies unless they would give up the guns that they had taken. Their surrender was pleasing to Governor Macdonell, and made it unnecessary to send them back to Britain as prisoners.

As the spring approached, the Governor was very anxious to have the necessary boats built for their ascent of the streams by which they were to reach their destination on Red River. The Governor, being accustomed to the style of boats used at that time on the Hudson and other rivers of New York State, sought to build his boats to carry the colonists on the same model for the ascent of the Hayes or Nelson River. He was, however, very much dissatisfied with the clumsiness of the settlers, and even of the Company's workmen who assisted unwillingly in their construction.

Taken all together, however, the life in the Nelson

Encampment was as comfortable as could have been expected. The officers fared well, and the immigrants who did not take part in the rebellion had little of which they could complain. Though in early winter scurvy threatened to be troublesome, yet after New Year a fair supply of fresh and dried venison was obtained from the Indians. In April, upwards of thirty deer were snared or shot by the settlers. As is the custom of the deer in the Far North, great herds of them—numbering, it is said, as many as three thousand deer of various kinds—crossed the Nelson River within a month. “Fresh venison,” wrote Macdonell, “is so plenty that our men will not taste salt meat”; and the settlers wondered at the abundance of nature’s providing—a thing they had never seen in their land of “brown heath and shaggy wood.”



## CHAPTER XI

### LANDING AT RED RIVER

(August 30, 1812)

THE long and dreary winter passed away slowly, but the passage of the ice in our outflowing northern rivers comes some weeks after the arrival of spring. When July 1 arrived, whatever had been their hostile feelings during the winter, all were anxious to go up the river to the interior; and none were more anxious for this departure than Governor Cook and Factor Auld. It had been a season of great responsibility to them. Besides, they expected to hear news from the interior through the high officials of the Company, Messrs. Bird and Sinclair.

On the opening of the river, the Company magnates spent their time in running the stores for the interior up the Hayes River to a spot called the "Rock," at the rapids of the Hill River, where it falls into the Hayes. The banks of the Hayes River are here very notable—they are of clay, and rise from 50 to 100 feet high. Being white in colour, the banks are said to resemble somewhat the chalk cliffs of Dover. For a hundred miles up the Hayes River, were it not for the rapid current, the boatmen would have had an easy task. The part of the river called the Hill River gave the unaccustomed settlers their

first severe experience with a series of rapids and portages, *i.e.* where the boats have to be emptied of crew and cargo, and where cargo and boat have both to be carried along the path around the rapid ; and of *semi-decharge*, where only a portion of the cargo needs to be removed. At times waterfalls or mountain slopes have to be faced, and great effort was required by the body of colonists in carrying up their clumsy boats made at York Factory.

The long-continued journey was a severe trial to the women and children. We cannot undertake to follow the struggling settlers up the fall, rapid, and portage. Fall Portage was one of the most severe of the difficulties. The stream is turbulent and unfriendly in the extreme, and we cannot say that the old men, women, and children were much solaced by the fact stated by a writer, " but in romantic variety and in natural beauty nothing can exceed the picture." Above Fall Portage were a dozen rapids, all to be passed with toilsome energy.

But with infinite difficulty more than half of the weary road from York Factory to Lake Winnipeg was passed, when the toilers reach for a short time a haven of rest. This was Oxford Lake, thirty-five miles long, and formerly known to the voyageurs as " Holy Lake." It is a beautiful summit lake. The Indians of this region have partaken of the restful character of the lake and are noted for their good character, docility, and industry. But the most notable part of the journey between Oxford Lake and Lake Winnipeg was " Windy Lake," called by the voyageurs " Lac de Vent," where invariably the traveller meets high winds and very often dangerous storms.

At length, after days and days of further toil, the company reached Norway House, at the foot of

Lake Winnipeg. The weather-beaten, footsore, and ragged travellers had come to the Lake whose name was the only one which had been mentioned to them in their Scottish and Irish homes. They had come 430 miles from York Factory, and, however homesick they may have felt, not one of them wished to face again the thirty-seven terrible portages which now lay between them and the "wind-resounding sea."

Norway House, with its fine site and evidences of trade, and with a considerable Indian population about it, awakened the interest of the strangers. Lake Winnipeg is a great and stormy lake, and its whole length of 300 miles was to be followed before their destination could be reached. Along the shores of this inland sea their boats were propelled in good weather, and the beach afforded shelter at night or in stormy weather. The season was passing, and haste was required to reach the mouth or delta of the Red River. This accomplished, they were some 45 miles from their destination. At this time the banks of Red River were well wooded, though there were broad fields of prairie—open grassy plains—behind these belts of forest. On this last stretch up Red River there was only one obstruction—St. Andrews, formerly called Deer Rapids. Up these their boats were "tracked," *i.e.* dragged by a line by those on shore. Coming up to the looked-for forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, they rounded what we now call Point Douglas in the city of Winnipeg. They had done well on their journey of 728 miles from York Factory to the Forks; and all this was covered in fifty-five days.

The colonists were somewhat hampered in their choice of a situation. On the north side of the Assiniboine River, at the junction with the Red River,

some eight years before this time the Nor'-Westers had built a wooden fort, which was known as Fort Gibraltar. This prevented them landing there. At length they agreed to go to the east side of the river, nearly opposite the Forks, and here make camp while the leaders chose a permanent place of settlement.

Thus it came about that the First Party of Lord Selkirk's colonists landed on the east side of Red River, a little north of the mouth of the Assiniboine River on August 30, 1812—thus marking the red-letter day of the founding of Red River Settlement at the Forks of the two rivers.

The Hudson Bay Company's men, who had come down from Brandon House on the Assiniboine River, were waiting for the expected goods which Messrs. Hellier and Heney, the officers of the Hudson Bay Company, were bringing for the East Winnipeg District. Orders to these men had been sent on in good time, but not a bag of pemmican or any food was ready for the hapless settlers. A few French people, called freemen, *i.e.* not connected with any of the Fur Companies, lived on what is now called the St. Boniface side of the river; but they lived from hand to mouth, and, indeed, the Company people were little better. The river was the only source from which sustenance might be had, and the fish were scarce.

Allowing two or three days for rest from the long journey, Governor Miles Macdonell, on September 4, 1812, summoned three of the North-West Company gentlemen from Fort Gibraltar across the Red River, the free Canadians beside whom they were encamped, and a number of the Indians, to take part with the settlers and the officers and men of the Hudson Bay Company in a function in-

augurating the new régime. The Nor'-Westers had not permitted their employees to cross the river to take part in the event. Facing, as he did, Fort Gibraltar, across the Red River, the Governor, in the assembled company, directed the patent of Lord Selkirk to the vast concession of territory to be read, "delivery and seizin were formally taken"; and Mr. Heney translated some part of the patent into French for the information of the French-Canadians. There was an officer's guard under arms; colours were flying; and after the reading of the patent all the artillery belonging to Lord Selkirk, with that of the Hudson Bay Company under Mr. Hillier, consisting of six swivel guns, were discharged in a grand salute. At the close of the ceremony the gentlemen were invited to the Governor's tent, and a keg of spirits was turned out for the people.

Governor Macdonell, having got the people arranged in a temporary camp, went with a boat's crew for a three days' thorough investigation of both banks of the river for some miles below the Forks, to find a suitable spot for settlement. The place found most eligible was "an extensive point of land through which fire had run and destroyed the wood, there being only burnt wood and weeds left."

This was afterwards, and to this day is called, Point Douglas. It is within the city of Winnipeg to-day.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE FIRST THREE CONTINGENTS

#### THE FIRST PARTY

**I**T is a fact to be noted that not one of the original Selkirk settlers who came in the pioneer party of 1812 is known to be now alive. The names of a few still survive in their descendants. One family still remains in Kildonan, who were of Orkney origin—the Harpers. In the original list “Nicol Harper” is named. He was the father of James Harper and of other members of that family. Another leading man of the party was a fellow-countryman of the Harpers; he was John Cooper. He was among the company which we shall see left the Red River Settlement to go to Upper Canada. A third member of the first party was Magnus Isbister, also from Orkney. His son became a distinguished educationalist in England, and left a scholarship fund to Manitoba University, now amounting to \$100,000.

Now that the settlers had landed on the banks of the Red River, and formal possession had been taken by Governor Macdonell, as the winter would soon be upon them, speedy steps needed to be taken for their wintering. Having to choose the spot for settlement, as we have seen, he, two days after the pageant of occupation, retaining a small number of



men with himself, sent the colonists up the Red River by land to a point sixty miles away, where the buffalo could be hunted. Here was a small French settlement called Pembina. Finding the Indians more friendly than the Nor'-Westers, he chose them as guides for the colonists, whom he sent to trudge sixty miles—men, women and children—while the luxurious Indian guides rode on their ponies.

Having chosen Point Douglas for settlement, the Governor, leaving behind a few men to erect colony storehouse, with three attendants, all on horseback, followed the settlers to Pembina, and arrived a day after them, on August 12. Here at least there was plenty of food. The French-Canadians and Indians vied in providing the colonists with buffalo meat. The Governor chose a site at the junction of the Pembina and Red Rivers; the forest there supplied plenty of logs for a storehouse and other buildings; and, having given directions for erecting buildings to be when completed called a fort, he left the colonists, with more hope in their bosoms, and speedily returned by boat to the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, to supervise the building there.

#### THE SECOND PARTY

The desertions which had taken place when the first party were leaving Stornoway incited Lord Selkirk and his agents to greater activity. Accordingly, in 1812, while the first colonists were on the route from York Factory for the Red River, enlistment of new men was going on—and for this party, chiefly in Ireland; this company numbered about seventy, coming from Mull, Broan, and Sligo. Sailing in the Hudson Bay ship, they reached York Factory,



and, pushing on, in the same year arrived at "The Forks," Red River, on October 27, 1812. They were under the leadership of a competent, gentlemanly Irishman, Owen Keveny, who some years afterwards was murdered on the Winnipeg River, by Sergeant Charles Reinhard, who was tried for his life in Quebec. As they were needed at Pembina, and seem to have been a capable body of men, they were sent up at once, and gave help in preparing the buildings. The arrival of this party greatly encouraged the forerunners at Pembina. The Governor and officers were happy to see their quarters and those of the whole united company completed on December 21. Governor Macdonell wrote home to Lord Selkirk, saying, "As soon as the place at Pembina took some form and a decent flagstaff was erected on it, it was called "Fort Daer." This, it will be remembered, was Lord Selkirk's minor title.

In May 1813 the whole colony, full of hope, returned to the Forks. They had been well fed upon dishes taught them by the Frenchwomen, made from pemmican—or dried buffalo meat—in one form called "Rubaboo," or in another "Roschow." During 1813 there was no progress made in agriculture. The prairie needed to be broken, they had no proper implements, and very few of them were farmers. During this year no other colonists arrived at Red River, and in the winter the dreary journey was of necessity made to Fort Daer, where they found the French people less cordial than they had been in the previous year.

The winter of 1813-14 proved very bleak and stormy; the snows were very heavy, and hunting the buffalo was most difficult. It was to them "the long and dreary winter." The Nor'-Westers were stirring up feeling against them. Alarmed in the

spring of 1814, the Governor made proclamation forbidding any food to be taken out of the country, but offering to purchase it for the colonists. The Nor'-Westers regarded this as unlawful and tyrannical. Of Keveny's party, numbering seventy-one, well-known members were Andrew McDermott, afterwards the greatest merchant of Red River; John Bourke, a clever and useful man; John Cunningham, father of James Cunningham, M.P.P., formerly of Headingley; and Francis Heron, of the Hudson Bay Company.

### THE THIRD PARTY

Lord Selkirk was a man of great determination. His reports from Governor Macdonell, being delayed as they were in transit, showed him the hardships and mishaps of his colonists. Yet his blood was roused by the opposition given his project. With great success in the Highlands, in 1813, a company—about a hundred strong—were gathered together and sent out under a most competent and popular leader, Mr. Archibald Macdonald. The ship was one of the best of the Hudson Bay Company's ships, the *Prince of Wales*, and she was adequately protected from French cruisers by H.M.S. *Brazen*. They were most unfortunate in a severe outbreak of ship-fever, from which a number of the most prominent and leading colonists died. So great was the danger in the eyes of the captain that he refused to carry the party to York Factory, but, following the motto, "Any port in a storm," insisted upon running into Fort Churchill harbour and disembarking the company there. Unfortunately a number of the colonists died of the fever after landing. As this was the best colony in numbers

and character yet sent, their misfortunes caused great regret.

After wintering there, in the spring, in order to get into their destination, a portion of them, consisting of twenty-one males and twenty females, undertook to trudge over the one hundred and thirty or more miles of mountain, rock, and valley, to York Factory. Starting at first in single file, they found walking six abreast a better plan ; and though three fell by the way and were carried by others, yet over their pathless and rugged route they reached their destination, a marvellous example of pluck and unyielding pertinacity. After remaining a month at York Factory, they reached Red River in time to plant potatoes for themselves and others. The remainder of the party followed by boats during the summer, and reached Red River ; and now lots were distributed along the river for the different settlers for the erection of houses and the cultivation of the soil—indeed, for founding homes.

But the clouds were gathering over the devoted settlement. The opposition of the Nor'-Westers was becoming stronger and stronger. In carrying out his proclamation against sending food out of the country, Governor Macdonell had, through his officers, seized pemmican belonging to the North-West Company. This irritated the Nor'-Westers, and the peace-loving colonists were greatly disturbed.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A RED-COAT INTRUDER

**T**HE North-West Company traders were daring men. They were accustomed to face the bear and the buffalo. They were men with plenty of means, and had posts all over the wide extent of Rupert's Land, and even beyond the Rocky Mountains. Their men had largely intermarried with the Indian women, and they would not brook what they thought was the high-handed interference of Lord Selkirk and his pugnacious governor, Miles Macdonell. So when the great gathering took place in July 1814, at Grand Portage, a Fort some forty miles from Fort William, on Lake Superior, and they saw the gathering of hundreds of Indians and traders, their pride rebelled when they spoke of Governor Macdonell trying to lord it over them. Besides, they believed that bringing settlers in would drive away the fur-bearing animals and destroy their trade. Also, they were British subjects, and thought that they had as much right to the country as Lord Selkirk had. Now that Lord Selkirk's Third Party had arrived, they must deal with the matter.

So they decided at their meeting of all the traders in July to actively oppose the settlers and destroy their work. Two men were selected for the task.

They chose a clever, brave, and cunning trader to go and live in Fort Gibraltar at the Forks and defend the Nor'-Wester trade and property, named Duncan Cameron; and with him a shrewd trader, Alexander Macdonell, to go out among Indians and Metis farther west, but to work in harmony with Duncan Cameron. Duncan Cameron was a Highland Canadian, who had for thirty years traded around Lake Superior. He had also been in the opening year of the war of 1812 an officer. Now he came to be the bourgeois, or trader, in charge of Fort Gibraltar. He was an adroit and smooth officer. He came dressed up in the red coat which, as a Militia officer, he had worn, and posted up on the gates of his Fort what was called his Captain's Commission. Then, besides, and perhaps most of all, he spoke the Gaelic language, which the Highlanders love greatly. He asked the leading Highland colonists to dinner at the Fort, was very kind to them, and professed to wish to help them in every way. His sweet words and good dinners quite won their hearts.

Governor Macdonell had in his possession nine small cannon, and Cameron feared that with these against him he should be beaten. So he stirred up the colonists, one day when the Governor was away from home, to ask Archibald Macdonald to hand over the cannon to him. On this being refused, the settlers broke open the stores and took the cannon over to Fort Gibraltar. This was a very daring thing to do. The leading settler was George Campbell, and Archibald Macdonald, Acting Governor, arrested him for taking the guns. At Cameron's instigation the settlers rescued their leader and defied Archibald Macdonald. Having gained more confidence by his success, Duncan Cameron, on the return of Governor Miles Macdonell, had the daring

to order the Governor's arrest. Macdonell at first refused to recognise the warrant.

Duncan Cameron and his colleague, Alexander Macdonell, now strove to rouse the Western Indians, as well as the Chippewa Indians of Red Lake, against the colony. Cameron and his sympathisers then constantly threatened to attack the colonists' houses. Shots were fired, there were narrow escapes, and the charge was being brought that Governor Macdonell was resisting the law, because Duncan Cameron, being a magistrate in Upper Canada, had power to order his arrest. To save bloodshed and conflict, Governor Miles Macdonell surrendered himself, and was sent as a prisoner to Montreal, though he was never brought to trial.

The Red-Coat intruder was succeeding marvelously !

The way was now open for the next step. Cameron now proceeded, after encouraging discontent and insubordination among them, and having undermined their allegiance to Lord Selkirk, to place before them a most attractive future. There can be no doubt that the condition and circumstances of the settlers were very bad. Their miseries cannot be spoken of lightly. They had all seen hunger and poverty. They had all gone through untold hardships on the tempestuous journey from Scotland to York Factory and the terrific exposure from York Factory to the Red River. They were now in the midst of alarms. Their future had no brighter light than had their present. If there were any just criticism to be made on the Founder and his officers, it would be that the distance and difficulties of the settlement at that time were almost beyond human endurance. The descendants of one of those who left Red River at that time writes that his father



and mother in later times in Canada in old age, spoke with the greatest bitterness of "Macdonell deceiver ! Macdonell deceiver ! "

Thus taking advantage of their difficulties, Duncan Cameron, having by his kindness and hospitality gained their confidence, offered to transfer them, free of charge to themselves, to fertile townships in Upper Canada, and to give them free lands in the neighbourhood of towns—two hundred acres to each family. He promised also to pay them any wages due to them by the Founder for work done. He also stated that they were only going to another British colony under the same flag, and that, now that he had the nine pieces of cannon in his possession, they could not be prevented from leaving the colony if they chose.

To make assurance doubly sure, his plan also included a sum of £100 to the leader of the disaffected, Mr. George Campbell, and a promise to others of his supporters of less note of a sum of £20 each. Canoes were procured for the one hundred and forty out of the whole two hundred making up the colony, and the party, with a feeling in many hearts that they were deserting their benefactor, who had been generous and kind in his intentions towards them, with bag and baggage embarked in their canoes for their long voyage on June 15, 1815. Their journey was to be one of upwards of a thousand miles, with few stopping-places along the route except the river-bank or lake shore to camp upon and the overarching sky as a canopy.

By the end of July they had made their journey of four hundred and fifty or more miles from Red River to Fort William on Lake Superior. But more than half of the voyage was yet to be made. Hugging the rocky shore of Lake Superior, down past Sault



Ste Marie, and then along the uninhabited shore of Georgian Bay, they at length disembarked at Penetanguishane. Next they came to Holland Landing, and then they had but a short overland journey of forty miles to Toronto. The entire journey had been made in eighty-two days.

It would be difficult to find a similar case of so many men, women, and children making such a long and dangerous journey as these departing Selkirk settlers, with Scottish tenacity, went through. The most noted settlement of theirs is to be found in West Givillimbury, north of Toronto. It is worthy of note that they did not settle down in one locality of Upper Canada. In the Talbot Settlement, near St. Thomas, the old graveyard has their tombs ; in the townships near London others of them settled ; and in various districts about Toronto scattered families are found. It is noticeable that the settlers, like their friends and relatives on the Red River, have had much success in their new homes, and have taken good positions in public and private life.

Out of the greater number of the settlers who had started on in their Hegira, about one-third of the total Selkirk Settlement remained on Red River.

The total destruction of the colony, however, was what the Nor'-Westers aimed at. Alexander Macdonell had yet to do his harsh and unsympathetic part of the work. This he turned over to a bright young Scottish half-blood, named Cuthbert Grant, a dashing horseman and the pride of his little party of Metis, who were beginning to call themselves "The New Nation." Exactly ten days after Cameron and his party departed, a notice signed by Cuthbert Grant was served on every settler, reading : " All settlers to retire immediately from Red River, and

no trace of settlement to remain." Thus thirteen families, allowed to take what scanty possessions they had, went forth into their boats and sadly rowed down the Red River and then to the foot of Lake Winnipeg, where they were to remain. The Governor's house, the mill, and the partially built cabins of the settlers on Red River were set on fire and destroyed.

One bright gleam of light shows through this dark episode. This was the daring defence of the Hudson Bay House by John McLeod, a sturdy Highlander. Beside the Trading House was the blacksmith's shop. With a three-pounder cannon, and lengths of chain cut up as shot, McLeod defied the Metis-cavalcade, and notwithstanding the loss of his life by John Warren, a Hudson Bay Company gentleman, McLeod's saving to the Company of £1,000 worth of goods would have made a famous victory.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE NEW GOVERNOR

**T**HE unjust and seemingly fatal blow struck at the life of the settlement might well have brought utter discouragement to Lord Selkirk at his seat in St. Mary's Isle. True, the brave McLeod held his little fort. He never lost confidence in Lord Selkirk's faithfulness or resource. With true prescience he went to work to rebuild the Governor's house, which had been destroyed by fire. He employed the French freemen who lived across the Red River, and made great progress in building Fort Douglas, so naming it after his lordship.

At the same time the colonists were at Jack's River, near Norway House, where they at least had peace. Though discouraged, yet they believed that rescue would come when Lord Selkirk heard of their plight. Though Lord Selkirk could not hear for months of their disaster, yet Colin Robertson, who was thoroughly in his lordship's confidence, and was in Canada, immediately took with him some twenty French-Canadians and made his way to Red River. Not having heard of the expulsion of the colonists, he went from the mouth of the Winnipeg River across the Lake Winnipeg, and up the Red River to the colony site. Here he first heard of the

colonists being driven out. At once turning about, he went down the Red River, and soon descended Lake Winnipeg to relieve the settlers. After much persuasion the settlers returned to their settlement, and very soon the Red River Colony and its houses began to appear again. So hope revived.

The news of disaster, when it reached Lord Selkirk, but roused him to greater effort. True, his Governor, Miles Macdonell, had been sent back as a prisoner to Upper Canada, two-thirds of his colonists had deserted, and now the remaining settlers had been dispersed ; but his interests were too large and his native courage was too great to allow him to falter.

He proceeded to choose a new Governor and to send another contingent of settlers to fill up the gap in his colony. Among his acquaintances he heard of a military officer, Robert Semple, to whom he offered the position of Governor. Semple had been born in Boston, United States, of British parents, and was seemingly Scottish. He had been engaged in mercantile affairs between England and America, and had in 1802 visited Cape Colony, in 1803 London and Spain and Italy, and South America in 1810. He had written four interesting works, chiefly of travel, but as the writer has said elsewhere, he was "probably too much of a gentleman and a scholar for the rough work to which he was sent." He is spoken of by Governor Masson in his "History of the North-West Company," not wholly with approval, but as "intelligent, honourable, and a man of integrity." He was under fifty years of age, and thus in the prime of life.

#### THE FOURTH CONTINGENT

The enlistment of a new band of settlers also was immediately begun ; Lord Selkirk took a personal

part in their choice ; and certainly this fourth contingent, in character and hopefulness exceeded any of the parties which had preceded them. They were chiefly from Kildonan, a parish in the north-east of Sutherlandshire, in Scotland. Their seaport was the little fishing and shipping village of Helmsdale. The dread shadow of the Highland Clearances had fallen over this region, and the families, educationally and religiously, were much above the average. Lord Selkirk's tall and gentlemanly figure was well remembered in the New World Kildonan by the older settlers, who have now passed away. They spoke of the genial face and easy, courtly manners of the Founder as he visited them in Scotland.

John Matheson, a schoolmaster, was among them ; Alexander Matheson, sergeant of the passengers, and Reginald Green of the same position, were among them ; a miller, carrying out with him millstones, was taken on board at Stromness, and most notable of all was a pious elder of the Church of Scotland, James Sutherland, who seemed to have been empowered by the Presbytery of Ross-shire, no doubt at the instance of Lord Selkirk, who was himself a member of the Church of Scotland, to baptize and marry in the colony in the New World. James Sutherland was a man of great influence, and is spoken of with much respect by Governor Semple in some of his reports to the Founder. Unfortunately, through the influence of the North-West Company, he is said to have been compelled to leave the Red River Settlement and go to Upper Canada, where he settled north of Toronto.

Under the direction of Governor Semple, the Kildonan contingent went out to Hudson Bay in the summer of 1815, somewhat less than one hundred in number. There were Sutherlands, Mathesons,

Murrays, McKays, Gunns, Bannermans, McBeths, Polsons—the sturdy ancestors of the people of Kildonan in the Manitoba of to-day. After their voyage across the sea, they landed at York Factory on August 26, 1815, and reaching Red River by the usual water route to the interior, arrived before winter set in, and were preparing for their New World life. Having the new Governor with them gave to the company an exceptional prestige. They were heartily welcomed by the afflicted remnant who had returned from their exile at the foot of Lake Winnipeg. There being no sufficient provision for their support, the whole Scottish colony again went to Fort Daer, at the mouth of the Pembina River, for the winter.

While, in October, the settlers were preparing for the winter journey under Governor Semple's direction, Fort Gibraltar, the Nor'-Wester headquarters, was seized, and the field pieces and other property taken from the Selkirk settlers were recaptured. Duncan Cameron, in charge of Fort Gibraltar, was also arrested, but on his promising to keep the peace he was given his freedom again and placed in charge of his fort.

The colony, with Governor Semple at its head, having all been removed to Fort Daer for the winter, there was a reign of peace at least for a time on the banks of Red River. However, in the districts along the Assiniboine River, where the daring young half-breeds were as horsemen and prairie hunters beginning to feel their strength, there was much discontent.

After the supposed destruction of the colony by Alexander Macdonell and Cuthbert Grant, it was not very likely that even the coming of a new Governor and a large band of colonists would prevent the Nor'-Westers and their native allies from making further attacks. We shall see.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE SEVEN OAKS MASSACRE

**A**FTER New Year in 1816, Governor Semple returned from Fort Daer to the Forks and took counsel with Colin Robertson, who seems to have been the most sane of Lord Selkirk's colonial staff. Their conference led to the conclusion that the North-West Company plan was so clearly hostile that to capture Fort Gibraltar and thwart Duncan Cameron's schemes was the only satisfactory course. During the remainder of the winter it was plain that the Red-coat intruder was plotting still. In April, accordingly, they arrested Cameron again; and, as he was still a dangerous opponent, although a prisoner, it was decided that he should be sent home to England for trial, by way of Hudson Bay. Thus did it seem that Nemesis pursued him for his arrest and expulsion from the country of Miles Macdonell. It turned out, however, a very costly experiment, for, having sent Cameron to York Factory too late for the Hudson Bay Company ship of the season, they were compelled to keep him a prisoner at the Bay for more than a year. Cameron returned from England to Canada, but succeeded in recovering £3,000 damages for his illegal detention.

The unwisdom of Governor Semple, however, led

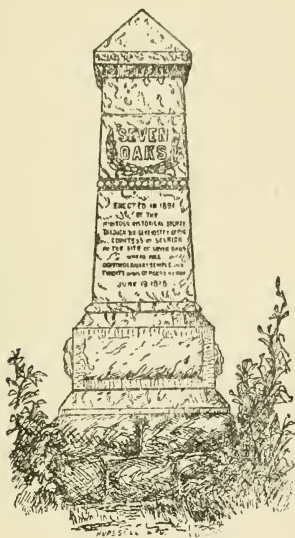


to still more serious troubles. Some time before Colin Robertson proceeded in charge of Duncan Cameron to Hudson Bay, the Governor had consulted him as to the advisability of dismantling Fort Gibraltar, which was now in his possession. As Robertson knew what fury this would rouse among the Nor'-Westers, and how it would be used as an argument amongst the Metis and Indians as a high-handed act, he strongly protested against this course. However, after Robertson had gone to Hudson Bay, Governor Semple fell back upon his former plan, and with a force of thirty men pulled down the fort and in a week levelled it to the ground. The protecting stockade was thrown into Red River, built into a raft, and floated down to Fort Douglas, and there used to complete that Fort, which, as we have seen, had been partially built by brave John McLeod. The Nor'-Westers' House at Pembina, near Fort Daer, was dismantled in the same way, and its store of provisions taken by the colony. This policy, which Lord Selkirk would not have approved, had much of the spirit of the military martinet, and brought the heavy penalty of death upon Governor Semple himself.

This ill-advised action of the Governor was the very thing to add fuel to the flame which, as we have seen, was already burning in the Far West. The Metis, who claimed some right in the soil because the Indian title had never been extinguished, were in red-hot humour over the action of the newly arrived official. The Indians, less impulsive, waited further news, and the Nor'-Westers were glad that the injudicious step which Governor Semple had taken would enable them to excite the natives still more. The certainty of conflict was, though the Governor failed to see it, so plain that the French

freetraders about the Forks, with their Indian wives and half-breed children, betook themselves and all their belongings to the western buffalo plains, until the storm should pass over. They were wise.

The Governor had no excuse for his rash and even



Seven Oaks Monument

illegal conduct, for he had in his hands letters of the North-West partners, intercepted by him, which showed their hostile temper. The Metis had shown, in the year before, their strength in their irregular cavalry, and it was by no means certain what the Indians might be led to do. The Governor had no soldiers—only a few members of his staff—and his colonists were not trained to arms. His action was

simply madness. The evidence given at trials which grew out of these sad events afterwards in Canada supplies clear proof of the facts of the case.

The news of the levelling of Fort Gibraltar startled Cuthbert Grant and his mercurial companions into immediate action. They were now "The New Nation"; they were the Bois-brulès, and would bow to no authority in Rupert's Land. They prepared their prairie horses, their firearms and equipment for immediate use, and along the Qu'Appelle River had nightly gatherings, when they recounted the deeds of their fathers as hunters, and sang French war-songs to keep up their ardour. They showed their real spirit and intention, seizing upon the Assiniboine River five boat-loads of pemmican and furs belonging to the Hudson Bay Company. Ready in May, armed as well as they could manage, and mounted on their prairie steeds, Cuthbert Grant's company of sixty wild spirits of the plains made ready for the fray. They were dressed in their blue capotes and bright red sashes, and they emulated as dashing riders and reckless warriors the Parthians of old.

The distance along the Assiniboine River from the mouth of the Qu'Appelle of some 120 miles to Portage la Prairie was speedily covered, and here they halted, 60 miles from Red River Settlement. The crafty trader, Alexander Macdonell, who had prepared them, had seen to it that some of them should be dressed in much the same costume as the Indians, and also hideously painted, in order to inspire terror among the colonists; but he remained at Portage la Prairie, while they pushed on down the banks of the Assiniboine. It was the leafy month of June, when on the 19th of the month, the cavalcade arrived at Boggy Creek, which is some

four miles from the Red River, where Fort Douglas stood, and near which Fort Gibraltar had been.

In order to show their intentions at this point, it is necessary to say that the concerted plan of the Nor'-Westers was to send to meet this western rally organised by Alexander Macdonell, another party of Nor'-Westers coming from Fort William, under the command of a prominent Nor'-Wester officer, Alexander Norman MacLeod. The plan was that these should meet on the banks of Red River, and then no doubt it was their intention to capture Fort Douglas as a reprisal for the pulling down of Fort Gibraltar by Governor Semple. At this time the Fort William party, which had come in boats more than four hundred miles, were but forty miles down Red River from Fort Douglas. However, the action of Cuthbert Grant in leaving the road to the Forks at Boggy Creek showed that he was crossing the prairie to meet McLeod and his party. Avoiding Fort Douglas in this way, they would no doubt have reached the settlers who lived down the Red River for a mile or two from the fort. It has been said that their aim was to attack the settlers. This seems rather unlikely, although they certainly did wish to destroy the settlement.

It was about six o'clock on the evening of June 19, 1816, when they were seen from Fort Douglas, and the alarm was given. By the use of a spy-glass it was seen that the party was armed, and seemed to be heading for the settlement. Governor Semple had a small staff of officers with him in Fort Douglas—Captain Rogers, Lieutenant Holte—and some of the colony employees—John Burke, Heden the blacksmith, John Pritchard, Sinclair, McKay, McLean, and others—and these made up a party of somewhat more than twenty. When the Governor's party

had gone half a mile, they saw that the mounted band was larger than they had thought. At this juncture the Governor ordered John Burke, who was a very competent man, to go back to Fort Douglas for a piece of cannon and as many men as Miles Macdonell, who was back again at the fort, could spare. In the meantime some of the settlers were hastening to the fort for protection, having seen Cuthbert Grant's mounted band.

After some skirmishing, the Bois-brûlé mounted party came in the form of a half-moon up to the Governor and his followers. A Frenchman named Boucher, one of Cuthbert Grant's party, came out on horseback and met the Governor. Question and answer brought from Boucher the reply that they wanted their fort—evidently referring to the dismantled Fort Gibraltar. A shot was fired, by whom or for what purpose—some held it to be an accident—cannot be settled. The firing increased, and Governor Semple fell wounded. At first he was not mortally wounded, but being left in the custody of a French-Canadian, an Indian of bad character in the party came up to the Governor, and, shooting him in the breast, killed him on the spot. While only one of Cuthbert Grant's followers was killed in the fray, no less than twenty-two of the Governor's party were killed, including the Governor and staff.

Cuthbert Grant, in the flush of victory, then gave notice that "If Fort Douglas is not given up with all the public property instantly and without resistance, man, woman, and child will be put to death." Fort Douglas was surrendered without a struggle; some forty-five of Cuthbert Grant's party occupied the fort; and Cuthbert Grant, the victor, was in command. Many of the dead were left on the field, and, being exposed for several



Lord Selkirk.

[illegible]



days, were torn to pieces by birds and beasts. The body of Governor Semple was carried to the fort and was buried there.

Again the colonists were compelled to depart. McLeod's party from Fort William, several days too late, thus on June 23 met the whole body of the fugitives who were going down the Red River to their rendezvous of a few months before, at the foot of Lake Winnipeg. Seven or eight boats carried the whole of the settlers. The settlers were compelled to land ; all the papers in their effects were examined ; McLeod took possession of all letters, account books, and documents of every kind. He even broke open Governor Semple's trunks, and altogether treated the poor refugees with needless severity. Seven days after the fight, McLeod's party reached Fort Douglas, to be rapturously received by the Bois-brulès. McLeod took command, and for days there was one continuous scene of revelry in the fort. For the next eight or nine months the Nor'-Westers held Fort Douglas.

## CHAPTER XVI

### LORD SELKIRK RELIEVES HIS COLONY

**F**ORTUNATELY for Lord Selkirk, he was unable to learn regularly all the troubles of his colonists or the worries of his officers. However, when he heard after a long interval of the work of Duncan Cameron and of the constant assaults upon his colony, as well as of the arrest of Governor Miles Macdonell, he determined to cross the Atlantic and go to the rescue of the colony. It was late in the year 1815 before he could leave Scotland, but with his Countess, his son Dunbar, and his two young daughters, he reached Montreal at the end of October of that year. It was too late in the year to venture on the inland waters of Canada, and so he spent the winter in Montreal, making his plans for the coming spring.

His winter experience was most uncomfortable. Every movement made by him was watched by the Nor'-Westers; even Governor-General Sir Gordon Drummond, a Briton like himself, was so influenced by the magnates of the Fur Trade that he would take no steps of any importance to assist in keeping the peace in Red River Settlement. Lord Selkirk was, however, made a Justice of the Peace in Upper Canada and the Indian Territories, but was only allowed to take with him a sergeant and six men to

protect him on his western journey. His energy and ingenuity, however, prevailed. Though he was not allowed to take a military force, he engaged a hundred men of the two Swiss regiments which were being disbanded at the close of the war of 1812-15. These he engaged as settlers under pay, and provided them with muskets and accoutrements. From the name of their Colonel, they were called De Meurons.

The winter over, Lord Selkirk engaged boats and a hundred voyageurs, and on June 16, 1816, went up Lake Ontario to Toronto, by land across country to Georgian Bay, and through it to Sault Ste Marie. When passing Drummond Island, his lordship stopped, this being the last British garrison on his route; and here he learned that even the Indians of the Lakes had been approached to fight against him, but had refused. Passing through St. Mary River, Lord Selkirk, on entering Lake Superior, first heard of the killing of Governor Semple and his party, of the capture of Fort Douglas, and the expulsion for a second time of his beleaguered colonists.

Instead of going on by way of Fond du Lac—now Duluth—as he had intended, he went directly to Fort William. Time fails us to tell of the assaults, arrests, imprisonments, and conflicts which took place at Fort William. In self-defence, however, he was compelled to capture the fort. The complications of the Fort William arrests and counter-arrests afterwards brought him great trouble and loss in Upper Canada. For the greater comfort and safety of his men, who had now to wait till nearer spring, he encamped at a spot some miles up the Kaministiquia River, which has ever since been called “Point de Meuron.”

In March, measures were quietly taken for the

march of the De Meurons for upwards of four hundred miles overland to Red River, and for their sudden appearance in the colony. This plan they carried out successfully, reaching Red River near the United States boundary-line, and by following it and making a circuit by way of Silver Heights, unexpectedly appeared before Fort Douglas. Being trained soldiers, they prepared ladders, surprised the fort at night, and took possession of it without a struggle, for its rightful owner, Lord Selkirk.

Lord Selkirk himself followed on the opening of navigation, and on May Day, 1817, first set foot on his principality on Red River. He occupied Fort Douglas along with the De Meurons, and was the centre of attraction to the settlers, the Indians, and even to his enemies, the Nor'-Westers. Some of the old Red River settlers used to tell the writer of his appearance and manner. "He was tall and thin, and refined in appearance. He had a benignant face; his manners were easy and polite." The Indians, believing him in some way to be connected, as a noble, with the king, were greatly impressed by him. When he afterwards made a treaty with them, and became the source of the annual bounty paid to them, they knew him as the "Silver Chief."

His kindness and generosity in his attending, as soon as possible, to the wants of his unfortunate settlers, who had been brought back from Jack River, was characteristic of him. On the spot where the church and burial-place of St. John's are still seen in Winnipeg, he gathered all his colonists and said to them: "The parish shall be Kildonan. Here you shall build your church, and that lot," he said, pointing to the lot across the little stream called "Parsonage Creek," "is for a school." "He was thus," as has been said, "planning to carry out the

devout imagination of the greatest religious mind of his and their nation—John Knox: "A church and a school for every parish." A survey of a general kind had been made of the parish by Peter Fidler, the quaint old surveyor of the Hudson Bay Company, but the length of the lots was said to have been decided to be as much as could be seen by looking out to the prairie under the belly of a horse—and this was about two miles.

One of the great services to his settlers, as well as to the Government, was his making the first treaty in the Western Country, with the several tribes of Indians represented in the territory conceded to him. The usual "pow-wow," so dear to the heart of the Indian, was held, and Indian eloquence reached a great height.

PEGUIS, the Saulteaux chief, who had befriended the settlers from the beginning, denounced the Metis. He said, "We do not acknowledge these men as an independent tribe."

L'HOMME NOIR, the Assiniboine chief, said, among other things, "We have often been told you were our enemy, but we hear from your own mouth the words of a true friend."

ROBE NOIRE, the Chippewa, rose to eloquence as he declared, "Clouds have overwhelmed me. I was a long time in doubt and difficulty, but now I begin to see clearly."

Fortunately, while Lord Selkirk was still in Red River Settlement, there arrived a man of great ability and fitness for the work to which he had been appointed by the Governor-General of Canada. This was Mr. William B. Coltman, who had been chosen to investigate the Red River troubles. He had come to Red River prejudiced against Lord Selkirk, regarding him as an intruder and a proud

aristocrat, but found him so fair and reasonable that he expressed great admiration for the candour and fairness of his lordship. Understanding the motives of both parties, Commissioner Coltman made a most judicious report, and it was the general opinion that his decisions were the means of leading to an era of peace, and in the end to the union of the Hudson Bay and North-West Companies in 1821.

Being, like his colonists, of a highly religious disposition, Lord Selkirk renewed his promise to send them a clergyman of their own faith, and showed that it was no fault of his that this had not already taken place. He renewed his promise to them, saying, "Selkirk never forfeited his word."

When the affairs of his colonists seemed fairly well in train, Lord Selkirk left Fort Douglas and went south through the United States to St. Louis, never to see his colony again. As showing his large-heartedness, it may be stated that one of the objects of his going down the Mississippi River was to visit the parents of a man who had been stolen as a child by the Indians and had been carried to the Far West. Returning to Montreal, Lord Selkirk met his family, who had with constant anxiety awaited his return from the dangers of the Western Country.

He had still a work to do in Canada.



## CHAPTER XVII

### PERSECUTION IN CANADA

FOR sixty or seventy years after these alarming and unjust attacks on Lord Selkirk, Canadians had practically forgotten that such events had ever happened. Even in Red River Settlement, the old men had largely passed away and carried their secret with them. The union of the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies, some five years after the massacre of Seven Oaks, had led them to speak cautiously of their former difficulties. The references prevailing in any Canadian books which mentioned the matter were, that Lord Selkirk was a "visionary nobleman," that his treatment of the Canadian traders from Montreal was "high-handed," and that silence was the best mantle with which to cover his lordship's memory and the troublesome feud that he was the means of introducing into the Canadian wilds.

Having had about ten years' residence in Winnipeg on the banks of Red River, and been in the position to know Kildonan, the centre of the Selkirk Settlement, the writer investigated the case, covered all the literature extant, formed the acquaintance of Lord Selkirk, the son of the Founder, and of his sister, Lady Isabella Hope, and, as the result, published in London, in 1882, his book on "Manitoba,"



which was a full presentation of the case as given from the authorities, and which vindicated the memory of the "good Earl" whom his settlers had adored.

The son of Duncan Cameron was very angry, and threatened the writer with reprisals; a number of the earlier men of Nor'-Wester antecedents were unbelieving and uncertain; but the current of true history has completely restored Lord Selkirk's name and memory, and now great Western communities are proceeding with gladness to celebrate the centennial year of Lord Selkirk's "Settlement."

The crowning injustice and persecution of Lord Selkirk meted out by the Nor'-Westers and their Canadian sympathisers took place when Lord Selkirk returned from Red River Settlement in 1817. In 1816 the great power of the North-West Company was seen during his stay in Montreal, when virulent attacks were made upon him by anonymous writers, "Adam MacAdam" and "Mercator," in the *Montreal Herald*, although he had a vigorous defender in "Manlius." By the attacking writers, Lord Selkirk was represented as the greedy, vindictive, and unscrupulous invader of the meek and docile flock of fur-traders.

Common interest and common principles of action led Dr. John Strachan, of York—the redoubtable moving spirit of the Family Compact—to come to the aid of his Nor'-Wester friends in Montreal. Strachan's pamphlet was a determined attack on his countryman Lord Selkirk, whom he charged with being grasping and heartless. He derided his emigration scheme, spoke of danger from the Indians to the innocent Scotch settlers, represented the Red River country as sterile, and declared that "if the Red River Colony should succeed, it must



Dunbar James, 6th Earl of Selkirk.

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ultimately belong to the American Republic." Thus, during the whole of 1816, a torrent of abuse was hurled forth against the devoted Earl.

On the return of Lord Selkirk in 1817, through the United States, he came to Albany, and proceeded to Canada to meet the lawsuits which had been brought against him. In this it is plain that—shameful as it may be to the honour of British justice—the whole legal machinery of Upper and Lower Canada seemed to be controlled by the North-West Company and its friends. First, Lord Selkirk hastened to Sandwich, in the western extremity of Upper Canada, near his Baldoon Settlement. Here four charges were laid against him in the Court :

1. Having stolen eighty-three muskets at Fort William.
2. Having riotously entered Fort William, August 13, 1816.
3. Assault and imprisonment of Deputy-Sheriff Smith.
4. Resistance to arrest.

The first charge was so contradictory that it failed. On account of want of witnesses the other three counts could not be dealt with, so that £350 bail was put on him to appear again. Colonel Coltman had already laid him under bail of £12,000 to appear at Montreal. At Montreal the Court declared that it had no jurisdiction ; but the bail was continued on him to appear in Upper Canada. It was remarked at the time that he must thus " appear in a separate and distinct colony, at an indefinite time, an indefinite place, and before an indefinite Court." The "law's delays" were singularly exemplified in his trials. In September 1818, the trial took place in

Sandwich, Upper Canada. Against Lord Selkirk, and with him John Pritchard, was brought the charge of "a conspiracy to ruin the trade of the North-West Company." The Grand Jury, however, had some sense of fairness. It would not allow the Attorney-General, John Beverley Robinson, to examine the witnesses, nor would it report to the Chief Justice Powell. The Chief Justice summarily dismissed the Grand Jury, and the Attorney-General entered the Grand Jury room and carried off the indictment. Lord Selkirk now allowed his witnesses to return to Red River.

On the meeting of the Legislature, of which the Chief Justice was a member, power was obtained to move a cause from one district to another. Thus the dice were loaded, and the case was brought before a subservient jury in Toronto. Lord Selkirk was fined £500 for resistance to arrest, and a verdict was rendered against him for the false imprisonment at Fort William of Trader McKenzie, of £1,500. One wonders what would have been given to Duncan Cameron, had his peccadilloes come before the Court.

Lord Selkirk then sought to bring actions against forty or fifty partners, clerks, and servants of the North-West Company for murder, robbery, arson, and other capital crimes. Yet in four-fifths of these cases the prisoners were spirited away, and great expenses were wilfully added to the trials. Even Cuthbert Grant and others charged with the most serious crimes were deliberately allowed to leave prison in Montreal on their entering into small recognisances.

It will be remembered that in the case of George Campbell, who was the leader of the party led away from the colony to Upper Canada, that he was

liberally rewarded for the part he played. He was prosecuted by Lord Selkirk and tried in Montreal. The Grand Jury found him guilty of robbery, arson, and malicious shooting of the loyal settlers. His case was considered too serious to allow him to be bailed out. Without any regular certificate, Campbell was taken to the prison. A Nor'-Wester medical officer signed the necessary document that he had a dangerous fever. The two judges on the bench—one of them with a son in the North-West service and the other married to the sister of a partner—went to the jail and signed an order for the patient's removal, which, according to law, no one but the Chief Justice could do. Campbell was then carefully wrapped up and sent to hospital ; on the second day he obtained leave from his sick nurse to walk out and see his wife ; he escaped and betook himself to the United States.

At York, in 1816, charges were brought against those said to have been concerned in the killing of Governor Semple. The evidence was clear, but the jury failed to find a verdict against the prisoners. The evidence was printed by both sides, with notes and comments suited to their prejudices.

Though Commissioner Coltman's Report was looked on by Lord Selkirk and his friends with some suspicion, yet an effort was made by the Nor'-Westers to compromise the matters at issue between Lord Selkirk and the partners. No doubt something of the nature of even a financial compromise was intended to meet the frightful expense of the legal and other matters. Lord Selkirk's mind revolted against this. True man that he was, he said that in doing such a thing he would be " binding himself to throw a veil of obscurity over a tissue of unparalleled crimes, in which he should be assist-

ing to procure impunity for incendiaries and murderers ; in which he would become the instrument of establishing the right of the strongest, as the only law of all the northern territories of the continent, fencing them out as beyond the pale of legal protection, and destined to remain for ever a band of banditti."

As an honest man, a patriot, a nobleman, and a Christian, this he could not do.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### LORD SELKIRK RETURNS HOME TO DIE

**F**EW men ever went back from the New World to the Old more discouraged than did Lord Selkirk, crushed and heart-broken, in 1818.

Three years before, when in Montreal, although disturbed in mind, yet he was full of hope, for he felt that he was advancing a patriotic and benevolent enterprise. Though never strong in body, his health had suffered seriously. Withal, his mind could not rest. He had refused the compromise offered him in Montreal; and now, in his native land, where law prevailed and where liberty had broadened slowly down from precedent to precedent, he sought for justice.

His sister Elizabeth had been married to Sir James Montgomery, a leading Parliamentarian, and he brought the matter of Lord Selkirk's colony before the English House of Commons, asking for all the official papers in the case. The motion was carried, and one of the most valuable and most complete expositions of his case is to be found in the *Blue Book* of 1819—the Selkirk Papers. A full exhibit of the whole of the Selkirk trials is to be found in the papers on the shelves of the Canadian Archives—the voluminous collection was made from the Selkirk documents in Britain.

His state of health now preyed upon his mind, and the greater matter of his self-vindication was ever upon him. His sister Katherine, a woman of strong mind, to satisfy him, appealed to Sir Walter Scott, his old College friend, to serve him in presenting his case in proper form before the British public. A copy of a letter is extant giving Sir Walter's high appreciation of Lord Selkirk; and though he was very ill himself and almost unable to write at all, he said, "I never knew in my life a man of a more generous and disinterested disposition, or one whose talents and perseverance were better qualified to bring great and national schemes to conclusion."

This letter was written in June 1819. As the summer passed over him, the shadows began to fall upon him. His colony was not likely to be annoyed any more, for full publicity had at least driven his opponents to cover; and the heavy financial responsibilities of his immense landed possession on Red River, and the wants of his needy colonists must be handed over to others—his relations, the Hudson Bay Company, and a small staff which he had brought back from Canada with him.

His brave Countess and her young family went with his lordship to the south of France, hoping that he might benefit by the soft breezes of the Mediterranean, but his ailment was mental as well as physical, and he did not improve as the winter dragged on. He was living in the town of Pau, at the foot of the Pyrenees Mountains, and on April 8, 1820, he passed away, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery of Orthes. His chief joy was in the thought that he had done his duty to his suffering fellow-countrymen.

It was a striking thing that while Lord Selkirk died early in April, his great competitor and op-

ponent in his colonisation scheme, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, died on March 12. There were only twenty-seven days between them. They were both remarkable men. One an ardent Highlander, the other a Lowland nobleman, but, as we have seen, fond of his Highland countrymen. In some respects—in his strong physique, his power of organisation, his dashing leadership, and possibly in adaptability and personal magnetism—Sir Alexander was the greater man of the two ; but in fineness of brain, in keenness of thought, in breadth of interest, and in high spiritual and imaginative power, Lord Selkirk seems to be higher. Both seem to have had an equal measure of Scottish tenacity of purpose ; they were equally brave in the hour of trial ; and were both patriotic and Imperialistic. We should say they were alike lacking in humour and wanting in the love of comradeship, but both were born to command their fellows—the one by his appeal to glory, the other by the subtle compulsion of duty.

As we think of Lord Selkirk's sympathy for the poor and down-trodden cotters in the Highlands, of his willingness to give large means, even to the encumbering of his estates, for the sake of crofters in Prince Edward Island, for his fever-stricken folk at Baldoon, and for his footsore and buffeted settlers on Red River ; as we remember his courageous and painstaking care in selecting men like Miles Macdonell, Robert Semple, Colin Robertson, and Archibald Macdonald ; when we consider his pain and shame in receiving the coarse and unrelenting buffeting of the fur-traders, accustomed only to force and blows ; when we imagine the mental anxiety, the human pity that touched his soul, and the thought that of many of his colonists' miseries he was the indirect cause ; and when we appreciate

his deep consciousness that his self-denial and sacrifice were misunderstood and laughed at, we must surely class him with the noblest of Earth's suffering souls.

“ Shall it then be unavailing,  
All this toil for human culture?  
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,  
Must they see above the sailing,  
O'er life's barren edge, the vulture ? ”

Such a fate as this was Dante's,  
By defeat and evil madden'd ;  
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,  
Nature's priests and Corybantes,  
By affliction touched and saddened.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### HIS DREAM FULFILLED IN THE CENTENNIAL YEAR

**L**ORD SELKIRK has been vindicated. His dream is fulfilled. It is true that it has taken a hundred years to fully realise it.

In the year after Lord Selkirk's death the two Fur Companies united. For twenty years after the arrival of the first party, the Selkirk Settlement was still unorganised and unformed. Lord Selkirk's heirs held the vast domain, still acting through unsatisfactory Governors; and the people were in serious debt to the Selkirk estate. The De Meurons proved themselves to be poor settlers, and, after a great flood in 1826, betook themselves to the United States, and the Selkirk settlers were grateful at their departure.

Shortly after Lord Selkirk's death, a party of Swiss watchmakers and mechanics came to Red River Settlement, but they were unsuited to the conditions of the country, and the great flood also frightened them from the colony. They were then incorporated into the warp and woof of the United States. But with true Scottish tenacity, the Selkirk people held to their farms, received the consolations and ministrations of faithful Episcopal clergymen who were sent out to them through the agency of

the Hudson Bay Company; but it was not till 1835 that the Company relieved Lord Selkirk's heirs of responsibility. In that year Fort Garry was built at the Forks, and to a certain extent the settlers were thrown on their own resources. A Council of Assiniboine, as the district was called, was appointed to act with the Governor as a modified form of governing body. While good men were selected for this Council by the Hudson Bay Company, as councillors, yet it was not a representative Government, which fact led to a constant ferment in the colony.

The struggle which took place in Canada in 1837-8 did not affect Red River Settlement, but the settlement grew in numbers largely from natural increase, although it was also largely enlarged by Orkney and French hunters and trappers who, on retiring from the Hudson Bay Company, took up land along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and formed about Fort Garry French-speaking parishes, and chiefly below Fort Garry the English-speaking parishes. But as it had been in Lord Selkirk's time, the colony was still far in the interior and remote from the world of commerce. Goods came, as before, by the York boat or canoe from York Factory to Norway House, and then up to Fort Garry. On the other hand, the American settlements were approaching from the south, but St. Paul, Minnesota, the mart of the trappers and settlers, was still 450 miles distant, and the only connection was over the prairies by Red River cart.

In 1851 the Kildonan settlers received the first minister of their own faith, for whom they had so fervently sought and prayed. But they were still an unique community, living in isolation, having their own manners and customs, with also their



Bust of Lord Selkirk.



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parish bickerings and outbreaks of feeling. One of these settlers of poetic vein named the settlement buried in the prairies as "Britain's one Utopia." Even yet, Lord Selkirk's dream was not fulfilled. The Chinese Wall of Hudson Bay Company exclusiveness had never been dreamt of by Lord Selkirk, but until the time of the Committee of the House of Commons in 1857 in London, it was a stern reality.

Now, along with two printers, Messrs. William Coldwell and William Buckingham, came in 1859 that enemy of seclusion and monopoly, the printing-press, and straightway on the publication of *The Nor'-Wester* newspaper, began the agitation that in the end broke open the gates and pulled down the walls of monopoly and exclusiveness. Even this was not done in a day, but there began to drop in a number of Canadians and Americans who were free-born and were free men, not disposed to worship the image of Oligarchic Authority. They led the elements that for twenty years and more had been lifting up hopeless hands to brazen heavens to hear their cry for British freedom.

Deliverance, however, came from Canada—that same Canada that in the days of Lord Selkirk had been to him the embodiment of a bitter and persecuting Oligarchy. But it was a new Canada, with a dream of Empire, and the ardent desire for broad acres to settle its surplus people upon, and the hope also of having a United British Dominion from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Canadian railways and Canadian steamships, Canadian manufactures and Canadian banks, Canadian teachers and Canadian missionaries, have followed Canadian law and government; and many other settlers—British and foreign—are building up something like what Lord

Selkirk pictured in his day-dreams. But it has taken a hundred years to do it. The builders of great things cannot hasten. How slow has been the progress of our world, after all! Myriads of years have been needed to bring the world to what it is, and it is by no means finished yet.

The Western prairies, which Lord Selkirk, the so-called "kind-hearted but eccentric Scottish nobleman," had described as being reached by way of the Nelson River, and as having a "fertile and salubrious climate" between Lake Superior and the Pacific Ocean, have proved themselves the abodes, in the year 1912, of a million and three quarters of people, and this is but the beginning; while the Hudson Bay Railway, to the mouth of the Nelson River, is under way. It is now a quarter of all Canada, and like a young giant the Canadian West is coming to be something like the dream that Lord Selkirk saw in his bright visions.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE CENTENNIAL

**T**HE rolling years, whether we are ready for it or no, bring our fate to us. A hundred years since the first settlers landed on the banks of the Red River, on August 30, will soon be here. It has been a wonderful century, as exemplifying the fact that the old order changeth, yielding place to new. A hundred years ago the great War of Defence of 1812 was upon Canada. Also Napoleon was striking at the very vitals of Britain, and the Selkirk settlers in their ships had to be protected by a British man-of-war as convoy to guard against French attacks.

To-day Great Britain is at peace with all the world. Her King is Emperor of India, and Emperor of a far wider Empire than India. The British nations at home and overseas are free nations to-day ; and so, while we celebrate a century of growing freedom, we are also celebrating the growth of a new power in the people of Western Canada—a developing community, adding three or four hundred thousand new settlers to itself year by year. In the joy of accomplishment we may forget the bloodshed, and hardships, and poverty of the first settlers one hundred years ago. They built, and we have entered into their labours. The rebellions and struggles are left aside to the historian, while we hoist our banners and sing our pæans of gladness.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE FOUNDER

**A**LMOST every great movement centres in a man. And it is the wish of our Western people that in our great development of prosperity and comfort, we should begin to follow the custom of all cities and countries, ancient and modern, and put in solid stone or marble the very form and features of those who have won greatness for us or done noble deeds. This is almost our first act in this direction, if we except the statue in the Government grounds of Winnipeg of our late gracious sovereign, Queen Victoria. We have learned much of the life and character of Lord Selkirk, and without exception we have now come to count him worthy of the highest honour. Indeed, we wish to raise him on a pedestal ; to erect a statue ; to be able to point to him ; and in a far deeper and stronger sense than Lucian used the word, declare, "Outos Ekeinos"—That's the man. His relative, Lady Selkirk, the last Countess Cecely, who was the wife of his son, is alive and is taking much interest in this memorial ; his grandson, Captain John Hope, R.N., and his family are much in favour of it ; and we hope to see, on some convenient site in Winnipeg, the



LADY OF  
Selkirk

The present Lady Selkirk.

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capital city of Western Canada, a worthy monument of this noble man, chiselled and erected by a worthy Canadian artist. The motto on his lordship's coat of arms was :

"Firmior quo paratior"

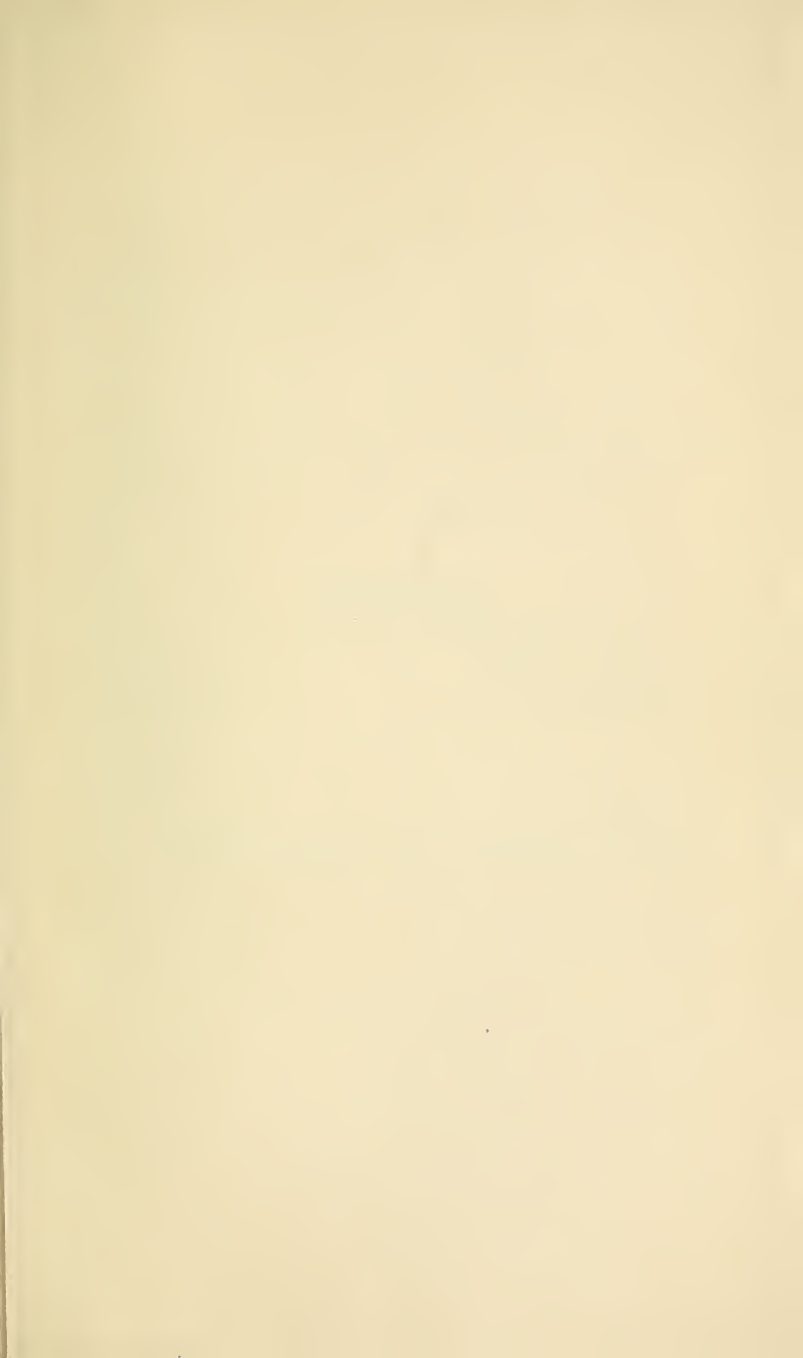
(The firmer as the more prepared).

Above the crest :

"Jamais arrière"

(Never behind).







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